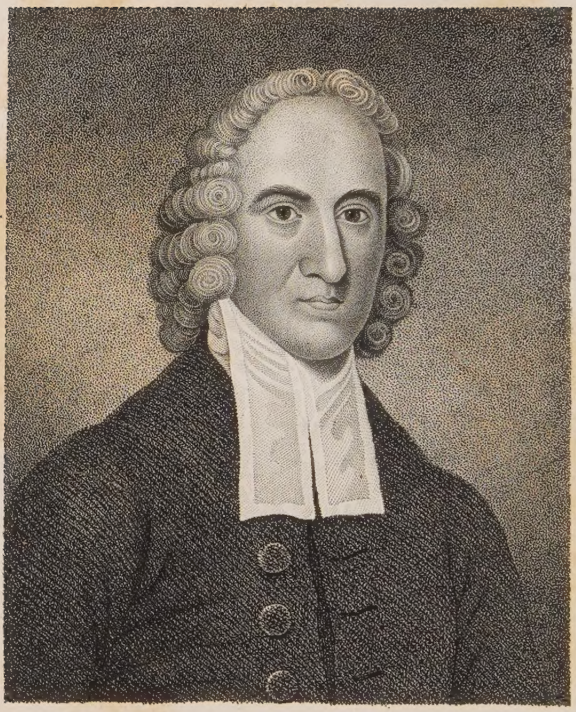

Smith. Sc.

REV. JONA. EDWARDS.

EDWARDS ON REVIVALS:

CONTAINING

A FAITHFUL NARRATIVE

OF THE

SURPRISING WORK OF GOD IN THE CONVERSION OF MANY HUNDRED SOULS IN NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS, A. D. 1735.

ALSO,

THOUGHTS

ON THE

REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN NEW ENGLAND, 1742,

AND THE WAY IN WHICH IT OUGHT TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND PROMOTED.

BY JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NORTHAMPTON; AFTERWARDS PRESIDENT OF NASSAU HALL COLLEGE, PRINCETON, N. J.

WITH

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, AND A FULL GENERAL INDEX,

PREPARED BY THE PRESENT EDITOR.

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RECOMMENDATIONS.

The following recommendations have been politely furnished by gentlemen, whose opinions, we doubt not, are in unison with the body of evangelical clergy in the United States.

From the President and Professors at Princeton, N. J.

We know of no works on the subject of *Revivals of Religion*, at once so scriptural, discriminating, and instructive, as those of the late illustrious President EDWARDS. At the present day, when this subject so justly engages a large share of the attention of the religious public, we should be glad if a copy of the volume proposed to be republished by *Dunning and Spalding*, could be placed in every dwelling in the United States. It exhibits the nature of genuine revivals of religion, the best means of promoting them, the abuses and dangers to which they are liable, and the duty of guarding against these abuses and dangers, with a degree of spiritual discernment and practical wisdom, which have commanded the approbation of the friends of Zion for the greater part of a century.

SAMUEL MILLER,
A. ALEXANDER,
C. HODGE,
JAMES CARNAHAN.

Princeton, September 21, 1831.

From the President and Professors at New Brunswick, N. J.

Much conversation is had at the present day on the subject of revivals of religion in our country.

That there is a difference of opinion among professing Christians, as to their reality, their nature, and the modes of action to be adopted in promoting and conducting them, is also very apparent.

If by a revival of religion we understand that operation of the Spirit of God, which, through the instrumentality of his word, produces conviction, agitation, and conversion, in hitherto careless and impenitent sinners—or excitement, connected with increase of faith, love, zeal, and holy action, in the people of God, whether it be exhibited on a smaller or larger scale—in the case of individuals, families, churches, districts of country, or whole nations—it is strange that the possibility or reality of such a work should be called in question by those who are familiar with their Bibles, are acquainted with church history, or have any correct knowledge whatever either of the ordinary or extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit upon the souls of men. In such revivals it is true that there is in some instances only a temporary excitement of the passions, without a renewal of the heart, and in others a human co-operation which will neither bear the test of enlightened reason or of the word of God. These circumstances, however, are precisely what (from human weakness, and the artifice of Satan to bring the whole work into disrepute) we have a right to expect. Any judicious publication on revivals, and especially that written many years ago by the pious and discrimi-

nating Edwards, cannot fail, and especially at the present time, to be read with more than ordinary interest. Considering President Edwards as handling this subject with great propriety and discretion, I do hereby express my desire to see his work more extensively circulated through the churches.

PHILIP MILLEDOLER.

College, New Brunswick, Sept. 17th, 1831.

The Works of President Edwards have acquired no ordinary reputation. His "Narrative of Surprising Conversions and Thoughts on Revivals of Religion," written after much research and close observation of the various effects produced on the minds of gospel-hearers, in a time of general awakening, cannot fail to profit those who read it in a serious temper. I am pleased to hear that this Narrative is soon to be published in a form that will render it accessible by all, and hope that it may have an extensive circulation.

JAMES S. CANNON.

Theological Seminary, New Brunswick.

My own views of the "Narrative," &c., of President Edwards, are expressed in the above favorable notice of Dr. Cannon.

JOSEPH H. JONES.

I cannot but hope that the work, will receive an extensive and liberal patronage. It is the best body of practical theology within the compass of my knowledge. It is searching, instructive, edifying, scriptural. Let it be carefully read by every professor of religion, and studied and digested by every student of theology, and every young minister of the gospel. Let me just mention another desideratum: the republication of the same unrivaled author's work on *Original Sin.* The diffusion of these treatises in separate forms, would, with the divine blessing, greatly conduce to the increase of sound godliness, and check the progress of pernicious errors.

JOHN DE WITT.

New Brunswick, Sept. 1831.

From Ministers in New York.

To those who are acquainted with the writings of President Edwards, the highest recommendation of the present work is, that it is the best of them all. It is more than ten years since I first read it, and I well recollect my surprise that I had not read it before. I then thought it one of the richest volumes I ever perused. One impression I distinctly remember; and that is, that great injustice might be done the venerable and devout author, by viewing the work in *detached parts.* As *a whole,* it cannot be too highly valued, nor too extensively read, especially at the present time.

GARDINER SPRING.

New York, September 6, 1831.

The importance of *revivals of religion* is literally infinite: because conversions are infinitely important; and the spread and jurisdiction of the gospel of God over the minds of men everywhere is properly the grand *desideratum* and the destined prospect of the world. The discrimination of theological parties (if these must be and have a name) in the Christian world, will soon be made extensively by this criterion of PRINCIPLES AND PERSONS—THEIR KNOWN RELATION TO REVIVALS OF RELIGION! At the present time, all denominations considered, there are many whose ignorance of the whole matter is their only prominent characteristic in regard to it; many, as much

distinguished by enmity and an affected intellectual superiority to their theory and their fruits; many, by a latent ill-concealed antipathy, that affects to dislike only their excrescences and occasionally spurious accompaniments; and many, I bless God for it, who more and more love them, because they love Him, see in his light their incomparable worth, and desire them, prayerfully, practically, zealously, and yet soberly, in their destined universal prevalence.

The age ought not perhaps to be yet dignified as *the age of revivals;* because the dawn ought not to anticipate, or perfectly to characterize, the perfect day. But it is such an age exactly as will more and more demand, and now also does, revival principles, revival ministers, revival Christians, and revival scenes and glories multiplied: of course, I think *revival publications*, are as appositely needed; of the right kind, and calculated to enlighten, and guide, and assist the operations of the church of God, in *aiming directly at the conquest of the world to Jesus Christ and his glorious sceptre.*

With these views, I think the publication of *Edwards on Revivals* is very timely, judicious, and of excellent promise: I therefore cordially desire and recommend the extensive circulation and full perusal of that valuable and singular treatise. SAMUEL H. COX.

New York, August 3, 1831.

I am very glad that we are to have a new edition of "Edwards on Revivals," &c. Nothing could be more seasonable at the present day. I have read the work again and again, and always with new advantage.

J. M. MATHEWS.

New York, September 24, 1831.

We would cordially recommend to the Christian public the works of President Edwards on Revivals. These works were written in A. D. 1736 and 1742, and contain a faithful narrative of the glorious revival in New England by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in those blessed days, when clear, pure, and scriptural views of the doctrines of the gospel, and true practical godliness, sincerely characterized the children of the puritans. We could sincerely wish that this work, now about to be published by Dunning and Spalding, were in the hands of all our Christian brethren.

W. C. BROWNLEE,
CHARLES G. SOMMERS.

New York, August 5, 1831.

At the present time, there is no subject of such deep and increasing interest to the American churches, as the subject of *revivals of religion.* It is a subject too on which no uninspired man was ever better qualified to speak or write than President Edwards—not only on account of his eminently discriminating and sanctified mind, but also on account of his opportunities of observation resulting from the extensive work of God which occurred under his own eye. I know of nothing so well calculated to exhibit the blessedness of such "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and at the same time to guard against the self-deception and other evils which are then likely to occur, as his "Narrative," and "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England, in 1742." On this account, I rejoice in another attempt to give this work a more extended circulation. W. D. SNODGRASS.

New York, September 22, 1831.

The "Narrative of Surprising Conversions," and "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England," from the pen of *President Edwards*, and originally published, one in 1736, the other in 1742, are works which well de-

serve to be perused and studied by all who feel a concern for the prosperity of the church, and who would become acquainted with the various ways in which the God of grace is pleased to approach the soul with the blessings of his salvation.

At the present time, when the divine influence is in a remarkable manner manifesting itself far and wide, it seems to be particularly desirable that the work should be given to the public in a detached form, so as to be accessible to all. JOHN KNOX.

New York, August, 1831.

I am pleased to find that it is proposed to republish the work of President Edwards on Revivals. The character of the author for intellect and piety, has its praise in all the churches, and needs no commendation. The work proposed to be republished, as well as the treatise *on the affections* by the same author, contain a clear, discriminating, and searching delineation of evangelical and vital religion. At its first publication it was highly useful, during a period of extensive revivals, in promoting the work of God, and in preventing and removing incident evils. It is hoped that at this period its republication will be greatly beneficial. THOMAS DE WITT.

New York, August, 6, 1831.

What President Edwards has written on Revivals, I consider a full and thorough discussion of the whole subject. If ministers of the gospel would read it once a year, it seems to me that all controversy among the orthodox with respect to the truths which are to be mainly insisted on, and the means to be used for giving such truths a free access to men's minds, would come to an end. If it were circulated among Christians where there is no revival, it would tend strongly to arouse the church to a sense of the importance of such a blessing, and lead them to seek successfully to promote the quickening of God's people, and the conversion of sinners. If read in a time of revival, it might be expected to give increased tone and energy to the revival feeling, and at the same time to regulate that feeling when excited. If read by minister and people in the decline of a revival, it might be expected, under God, to stop the ebbings of spiritual feeling, and bring back a heavier and richer tide of mercy. I rejoice in its republication, and recommend it to the careful perusal of all who love the salvation of sinners.

JOEL PARKER.

New York, September, 1831.

Dear Sir—I consider the proposed publication of Edwards' work on Revivals of Religion, as highly important, and, in the present times, specially appropriate. The work is full of valuable truth, instructive experience, and discriminating observation, well calculated to guard against pernicious perversion, that characteristic spirit of these days, which Satan would so gladly delude into extravagance and heresy. The publication will richly merit the patronage of a Christian public. Yours, &c.

CHAS. P. McILVAINE.

Brooklyn, September 23, 1831.

I concur in the foregoing recommendations.

JAMES MILNOR.

New York, 1831.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

A REVIVAL OF RELIGION is a subject of great interest and importance. The phrase has, by common consent, been appropriated to denote a work of the Spirit of God, turning the attention of considerable numbers in a place to the things of eternity, and bringing many, in a short time, to a saving knowledge of Christ. It is merely the success of the gospel, unusually increased. It is the conversion of numbers of sinners in a short space of time. Whatever interest is attached to the institutions of religion, whatever pleasure is felt in the success of a preached gospel, or whatever emotions arise, on earth or in heaven, at seeing *one* sinner repent and believe in Christ, all these must be heightened and enhanced abundantly at the multiplication of such results, which constitutes a revival of religion. The Savior himself sees the travail of his soul, and is satisfied, when converts are multiplied, as trophies of his grace. It is only through mistake or misinformation, that any who love our Lord Jesus Christ are grieved or alarmed at a revival of religion.

These seasons are as important as they are interesting. They constitute not only the glory and the rejoicing of the church, but her safety and life. In the darkest periods, the church has been saved from utter extinction by revivals. The first preaching of the gospel was attended with powerful revivals. The book of Acts is a history of revivals. The reformation from popery was almost everywhere accompanied with revivals. There were extensive revivals in the times of the Puritans in England. The early churches in New England had numerous revivals. Powerful seasons of the same kind were experienced in Scotland and Ireland, in the former part of the last century. At a later period, extensive revivals took place in England, under the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield. The revivals which occurred in America, under the ministrations of President Edwards and his cotemporaries, were distinguished for striking manifestations of divine power and grace. Numerous revivals in the United States marked the close of the last and beginning of the present century, both in the east and the west. And from that time they have been regularly growing more frequent, more numerous, more powerful and rapid, all over our country, to the present time. The last year was undoubtedly distinguished, above all that have preceded it, since the formation of the Christian church. Never before has the Holy Spirit been poured out in so many places at once; never before has the Lord Jesus gathered so many into his churches, in the same space of time, "of such as shall be saved."

There is reason to believe, that these displays of divine grace will continue to increase, till one general revival shall extend over the habitable globe. We are assured of the universal extension and final triumph of the gospel in the whole world. We know, from the "sure word of prophecy," that what we now see of the progress and effects of spiritual religion, is only a small sample of what is yet to be seen. And we thence infer, that all the revivals which have hitherto taken place, are only the first fruits of the glorious harvest. It is only by revivals that the work of conversion can overtake the increase of population in the world. It is only by revivals that the ministers and other instruments and means for sending out the gospel can be furnished. It is only in this way that infidelity and the love of the world can be made to yield to the authority of Christ. By no other process can the church gain strength and numbers fast enough, to meet the opposition which will inevitably be provoked by the growing influence and power of religion.

It is manifest, therefore, that the church is to calculate upon revivals of religion, as habitual events, and to consider the duties and responsibilities incident to revivals as her customary burden. Or rather we may say, that the state of revival, the rapid gathering in of souls to Christ, by the labors of his people, and in answer to their efficacious prayers, ought to be regarded as the natural and appropriate state of the church. And by consequence, the absence of revivals implies something wrong in the church, of declension, neglect of duty, sinning against the Lord Jesus Christ, destroying the souls of men.

It is incumbent then upon the church, to prepare for such a state of revival as we are thus authorized to anticipate. The subject of revivals must be more studied, and better understood. And the spirit of revivals must be more diligently cultivated. What an impulse would at once be given to the study of the art of war, if it were anticipated that the country would soon be involved in such a calamity. Why should not the science of revivals, and the course of action required in revivals, become a matter of general study in the church? Ministers have doubtless much yet to learn concerning revivals, the signs of their approach, the means of producing them, the manner of conducting them, the way to guard against difficulties, and to secure the happiest results. And every Christian ought to understand revivals, because every one has a part to act in relation to them. There is a growing conviction in the church, of the responsibility which rests upon every individual professor of religion, in times of revival. In times of revival it becomes manifest how much the conduct of each one may help or hinder the effect of divine truth. But without knowledge on the subject, no one can correctly perform his duty in revivals. And unless one understands the *principles* that are applicable in them, it is impossible he should be well prepared to act, in the ever-varying emergencies which a revival does not fail to exhibit. How great the calamity, to prevent or destroy a revival, from not knowing how to act in regard to it! Or to resist and extinguish a real revival, under a mistaken opinion that it is spurious! Or to encourage and cherish a spurious excitement, supposing it to be a genuine work of the Spirit of God! Or to have the

fruits which might have followed a revival stinted or marred, by any imbecile or ill-judged procedures!

With these views of revivals, and of their importance as a subject of religious study, when the publishers of the present volume applied to me, last summer, for advice in selecting a book which would be seasonable and acceptable in the present revived state of things, I could think of no one so appropriate as Edwards on Revivals. I was struck also with the coincidence, when on making inquiry of several individuals, whose opinion in such a case is of great weight, they spontaneously, and without any suggestion from me, designated the same work, as one which it was particularly desirable to have circulated in the churches at the present time. If any farther evidence were needed, it may be found in the testimonials to the value of these writings, which the publisher has obtained and prefixed to this volume. Coming as they do, from ministers of different evangelical denominations, and men who are known to differ in many particulars, the unanimity of their approbation, and the unqualified terms in which they have given it, are worthy of particular and grateful notice. It augurs well for revivals, that a work so full, efficient, and thorough, should have united such suffrages in its favor.

Probably no uninspired man was ever qualified for such a work, like President Edwards. To a very clear, discriminating, and philosophical mind, he added a habit of patient study and diligent research, excited and governed by a love of truth. The clearness, which in others is so often cold and dull, in him was warmed and enlivened by an experience in religion, singularly deep and spiritual. Having been most thoroughly trained in theology, and received practical instruction from his father, and from his grandfather Stoddard, respecting revivals, he was privileged to be the instrument of producing one of the most genuine and powerful revivals on record in modern times, the first in a series of revivals, of great extent and power. These things conspired to put in requisition all the powers of his copious mind, and employ them on the subject of revivals. His piety, zeal, faith, judgment, courage, integrity, were all tried, and not found wanting. He wrote these works with all the savor of the revivals fresh upon his soul. His mind was full of revival influence. He felt that revivals were the great interest, which ought to enlist the zeal, and absorb the sensibilities of the church. Indeed, these writings are so pervaded with the revival spirit, that they cannot be properly appreciated, but by one who partakes of the same heavenly influence. There is spirituality, a thoroughness, a devotedness to the subject, a delicacy of discrimination, which no man can duly understand, whose mind is in a cold, worldly, unbelieving, caviling state. None but a revived Christian can rightly comprehend, or judiciously apply, the various principles and rules which are here developed. He who reads this, and does not feel himself moved to prize, and seek, and pray for revivals, is poorly qualified to use the book, in its applications to others.

The account given by President Edwards himself, of the work in 1735, in the first portion of the subsequent volume, is so full and authentic, that it is only needful to mention this as the first in a series or cluster of revivals,

which extended over our whole country during a space of twenty years. The "Thoughts concerning the Revival," which occupy the principal part of the book, is a more labored work. It was written in 1742, during the progress of a very extensive revival, which commenced in Connecticut and Massachusetts, and continued for several years. This is what is generally known by the name of "the great revival." I gather from Trumbull's History, that it began in Connecticut, early in the year 1740. Its rise in Massachusetts is traced to the first visit of Mr. Whitefield, who reached Boston in September of that year. The Boston ministers seem to have entered zealously into the work, with the exception of Dr. Chauncey, who afterwards wrote a book against it.* Rev. Gilbert Tennent, a preacher of great eloquence and remarkable success, also visited New England soon after Mr. Whitefield, and spent upwards of two months in Boston. He likewise labored in Connecticut. The work was more powerful in the years 1740, 1741, and 1742, in Connecticut than in Massachusetts. The ministers who labored with most extensive effect were Messrs. Mills, Pomeroy, Wheelock, and Bellamy, who preached in all parts of the colony, and in Massachusetts, wherever their brethren would admit them. Some of the leading ministers, however, were bitter enemies of the revival; and about the time that this book was written, 1742, their hostility had reached its height. Dr. Trumbull says, it was the "plan of the old lights, or Arminians, both among the clergy and civilians, to suppress, as far as possible, all the zealous and Calvinistic preachers." The most severe laws were passed against them, and rigorously executed. As the consequence of this withdrawment of so many leading ministers, and the opposition which was made to the work, the zeal of many degenerated to enthusiasm, discord and fanaticism crept in, and in the subsequent years, many grievous separations and other evils took place in the churches. Still, however, the work of genuine revival seems to have gone steadily forward, notwithstanding these mixtures of human infirmity, so that by the year 1748, the balance of public opinion was entirely changed, the oppressive laws were repealed, and the ministers who had been punished for laboring in revivals, were restored to their rights. Much has been said about the disorders which attended these revivals; but Dr. Trumbull says, "Of these, in most of the churches, there was little or nothing; and perhaps they were not greater in any, than were found in the church at Corinth, even in the apostolic age." "It was estimated that in two or three years of the revival, thirty or forty thousand souls were born into the family of heaven, in New England, besides great numbers in New York and New Jersey, and in the more southern provinces."†

President Edwards wrote his "Thoughts on the Revival," in 1742, the most critical period of this interesting history, when the work seemed to be balancing, as it were, between the deadly opposition of some, and the extravagancies of others. And how admirably calculated was this man, how

* He subsequently avowed himself a believer in universalism.
† Trumbull, Hist. Conn. Book II. Chap. 8.

evidently was he raised up, to hold the scales in such a juncture. To be duly estimated, the work should be judged of in connection with the circumstances under which it was produced. The manner of laying out his plan, and the topics introduced, the practices which he either defended or censured, the wisdom with which he conducted his subject, are much more apparent, to those who will make themselves familiar with the historical facts by which it is illustrated.

It would be out of place here, to attempt an extended review of this celebrated treatise. The general plan will be seen from the table of contents. He begins his work, by showing very clearly which side he espoused of the main question at issue, and by avowing his full conviction that the excitement then in progress was a great and glorious work of God. He had no sympathy at all with those who doubted on this point, or who were so forever harping upon real or fancied errors, connected with the work, that they had no heart to rejoice in its blessed results. He explains, in a masterly manner, how these errors, so far as they had a real existence, were not only compatible with a genuine work of grace, but might well have grown out of the work itself, from the greatness and the novelty of the excitement, the opposition encountered, the weakness of the instruments, (modestly including himself,) and the imperfection of knowledge and grace in those who were engaged in the work. And he expresses, in no measured terms, but with equal kindness, his sense of the offensiveness of their conduct, who stood aloof at such a day of the espousals of the church, minding nothing but defects and blemishes. After all their cry about madness and enthusiasm, the worst madness in the sight of God, was to remain cold and inactive at such a time. Nothing can exceed the acuteness with which he handles the objections of those, who would pretend to judge of revivals by philosophy, or custom, or their own shallow experience. Would that it might ever be so, that those who feel called upon to promote the purity of revivals, should *begin* by such a triumphant vindication of them, as the glorious work of God's Holy Spirit. Were the principles here laid down duly considered, men would be slower than they are to discredit the genuineness of a revival, or the piety or orthodoxy of those who labor in it, merely because it appears to them to be attended with indiscretions or irregularities.

Part *second*, in which he enforces the obligation of all to be actively engaged in promoting the work, is full of the most solemn and weighty considerations. The principle is fully brought out, that a time of revivals calls for special efforts, to fall in with the designs of the Spirit, and promote and extend the work. It is difficult to conceive how a minister can read this part, and while revivals are prevailing all around him, still quiet his conscience without putting forth some special efforts to have his people share in the passing mercy. There are some passages in this part which have an awful solemnity, and ought to be deeply pondered by those, who are not adopting any special measures to promote and extend the work of grace now going on in our land. Those especially, who allow themselves to speak slightingly of these excitements, and to deride or abuse the instruments that God sees fit to employ, should take heed to some of the admoni-

tions, which come with so much force, as well as discrimination, from the pen of Edwards.

Having exhibited the danger of not acknowledging and promoting the work of revival, in a way calculated to carry trembling to the hearts of those that stand aloof from revivals, because they are carried on in a way which does not exactly coincide with their views, he next shows the blessedness that must necessarily attend a hearty co-operation in the work. Two principles are clearly maintained; that it is at their peril if men fail to acknowledge a real revival of religion, through any false notions, or *a priori* reasonings of their own; and that a time of revival imposes a special duty upon ministers and others, to go out of their ordinary course, and do something more than what is usual, to honor and advance the work. Men may be in fact opposers of the work, who do not directly speak against it as a whole; who even acknowledge, in general terms, that there is a good work carried on in the country; but whose habitual conversation shows that they are in fact more out of humor with the state of things, and enjoy themselves less than they did before the work began. Such are known, by being more forward to take notice of what is amiss than of what is good in the work. And there can be no doubt their influence, on the whole, is unfavorable to the revival. If men viewed things in a just light, the conversion of numbers of sinners would so engage their attention, and engross their hearts, that they would not be in a humor to dwell perpetually upon the errors of the instruments.

In the *third* part, we have a very discriminating and hearty defense of the subjects and zealous promoters of the work, from many groundless charges which had been brought against them. He vindicates zealous preachers from the charge of appealing exclusively to the passions. There is no danger of raising the affections too high in religion, if they are raised in view of the proper objects. Neither are ministers to be blamed for preaching terror to awakened sinners, if it is truth, and if proper pains are taken to enlighten them, and show them what they must do to be saved. And in regard to frequent meetings, and the like, he mentions that it is to the honor of God, when people are so much employed in outward acts of religion, as to carry a public appearance of engagedness in it, as the main business of life. And though it is not true, ordinarily, that the time occupied by religious meetings encroaches seriously upon men's worldly business, yet it may often be highly proper and useful to do so. And on the subject of frequent preaching, in reply to the objection that one sermon will crowd out another from people's minds, this great master of assemblies avers, that the main benefit of preaching is by impressions made upon the mind in the time of it, and not by any effect that arises from the subsequent remembrance of it.

Having shown in what way, and to what extent, effects on the body are to be regarded as probable tokens of God's presence and power; considered how far it is proper to use means for increasing the excitement in an assembly; and justified the earnestness of those whose hearts are full of the love of Christ, the practice of frequent singing, and the religious meetings of children, under proper regulations; he then proceeds, in part *fourth*, to point

out what things ought to be corrected or avoided, in promoting the revival. If any evidence were wanting, to prove the remarkable integrity and singleness of heart of this eminent servant of Christ, it may be found in the plain, pointed, and faithful manner in which he has treated this part of the subject. It required no small measure of grace to acknowledge, and of firmness to point out to public notice, the faults, errors, and delinquencies of those whom he had just been strenuously engaged to uphold and defend.

He begins with remarking, that the last resort of the devil to overthrow a revival of religion, is to corrupt it, or carry it to extremes; and that the errors of its friends and promoters furnish him with his greatest advantage. It is a great mistake for Christians to think, that even in the seasons of their highest spiritual enjoyment, they are out of danger from the adversary. These errors are traced to spiritual pride; the adoption of some wrong principles, respecting the guidance of the Spirit, the prayer of faith, or some other point; and ignorance of Satan's devices.

No enemy of the revivals could have done this part of the work with a more unsparing hand than Edwards. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. And every one, especially every minister, who is actively engaged in revivals, and successful in promoting them, should make himself familiar with this part of the book, as the chart of his constant dangers and easily besetting sins. He will find many around him, who are fond of throwing these things in his teeth; and the only just defense is, so to live and labor that they shall not be true. In regard to the use which is lawfully to be made of this part, it is proper to observe, that the points here agitated, are points which concern only those who are themselves actively and cordially engaged in promoting revivals, to be settled among themselves. Those who are unbelieving and inactive, will find matters enough to occupy their attention, in the previous pages. Indeed, it would be no bad rule, and would conduce much to the peace of the church, to have it understood, that no person should make use of this part, in discussing points connected with revivals, until he had read, marked, inwardly digested, and cordially approved and adopted the previous portions. It would silence many complainers, and might awaken some sleeping consciences.

In commenting thus freely upon the evils which will sometimes be found among those who are earnestly engaged in promoting the revival, Edwards shows that it was no part of his principles to cover up such things, or to palliate them. He does not admit the doctrine, that speaking of these things, in a friendly way, and for the purpose of correcting them, and of doing good to those who have fallen into them, will stop the revival. But it ought to be done by those who are actually engaged themselves in the revival, and not by those who are looking on, and taking no part nor responsibility in the work.

The pride, false principles, censoriousness, and other things which he has pointed out as errors, have not ceased from the church. And this part of the book still needs to be studied. Probably the views of our most judicious and warm hearted men are a little altered in regard to the importance which should be allotted to strong bodily emotions; and their ideas considerably

enlarged, respecting the extent to which the instrumentality of private brethren can be profitably employed in promoting the revival. The suggestions in part *fifth*, of what things should be done directly to promote the work, are not all as applicable to the present state of society, as they were when written; though they are still valuable, for the developement of important principles. And the most of them are of universal application. In particular, it is clearly implied in what he says, that the means of revival are to be varied from time to time, according to the aspects and circumstances of a community. And every engine of influence, which can be used consistently with truth, ought to be employed in forwarding the work. Ministers should exhibit great zeal and resoluteness in pushing the work forward. Mr. Whitefield's success was greatly owing to this. Coldness and irresolution in dealing with worldly, unconverted sinners, only confirm them in their course. The importance of external reformation, and of abounding in deeds of charity, as a means of revivals, is clearly set forth by Edwards, and has been abundantly evinced in the blessing which has every where followed the temperance reform, and the unusual displays of Christian benevolence, in the last two years.

In short, the work is full of the wisest practical instructions, based upon the most profound knowledge of the true principles on which these things proceed. And the hope is now fondly cherished, that the circulation of a complete and beautiful edition among the churches, at such a juncture as the present, will be eminently serviceable, in giving force, consistency, purity, and permanency, to the revivals now in progress throughout the country. That the blessing of God, and the enlightening and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, may secure such a result, is the earnest prayer of

THE EDITOR.

New York, March, 1832.

A FAITHFUL NARRATIVE

OF THE

SURPRISING WORK OF GOD,

IN THE

CONVERSION OF MANY HUNDRED SOULS

IN NORTHAMPTON,

AND THE NEIGHBORING TOWNS AND VILLAGES OF NEW HAMPSHIRE,
IN NEW ENGLAND:

In a Letter to the Rev. Doctor Colman,
At that time Pastor of Brattle street Church, Boston.

BY PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

WITH PREFACES,
By the Rev. Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse of London, and by the Boston Ministers.

PREFACE,

BY DR. WATTS AND DR. GUYSE.

THE friendly correspondence which we maintain with our brethren of New England, gives us now and then the pleasure of hearing some remarkable instances of divine grace in the conversion of sinners, and some eminent examples of piety in that American part of the world. But never did we hear or read, since the first ages of Christianity, any event of this kind so surprising as the present narrative hath set before us. The Rev. and worthy Dr. Colman, of Boston, had given us some short intimations of it in his letters; and upon our request of a more large and particular account, Mr. Edwards, the happy and successful minister of Northampton, which was one of the chief scenes of these wonders, drew up this history in an epistle to Dr. Colman.

There were some useful sermons of the venerable and aged Mr. William Williams, published lately in New England, which were preached in that part of the country during this season of the glorious work of God in the conversion of men; to which Dr. Colman subjoined a most judicious and accurate abridgment of this epistle: and a little after, he sent the original to our hands, to be communicated to the world under our care here in London.

We are abundantly satisfied with the truth of this narrative, not only from the pious character of the writer, but from the concurrent testimony of many other persons in New England; *for this thing was not done in a corner*. There is a spot of ground, as we are here informed, wherein there are twelve or fourteen towns and villages, chiefly situate in the county of Hampshire, near the banks of the river of Connecticut, within the compass of thirty miles, wherein it pleased God two years ago to display his free and sovereign mercy in the conversion of a great multitude of souls in a short space of time, turning them from a formal, cold, and careless profession of Christianity, to the lively exercise of every Christian grace, and the powerful prac-

tice of our holy religion. The great God has seemed to act over again the miracle of Gideon's fleece, which was plentifully watered with the dew of heaven, while the rest of the earth round about it was dry, and had no such remarkable blessing.

There has been a great and just complaint for many years among the ministers and churches in Old England, and in New, (except about the time of the late earthquake there,) that the work of conversion goes on very slowly, that the Spirit of God in his saving influences is much withdrawn from the ministrations of his word, and there are few that receive the report of the gospel, with any eminent success upon their hearts. But as the gospel is the same divine instrument of grace still, as ever it was in the days of the apostles, so our ascended Savior now and then takes a special occasion to manifest the divinity of this gospel by a plentiful effusion of his Spirit where it is preached: then sinners are turned into saints in numbers, and there is a new face of things spread over a town or country: "The wilderness and the solitary places are glad, the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose;" and surely concerning this instance we may add, that "they have seen the glory of the Lord there, and the excellency of our God; they have seen the outgoings of God our King in his sanctuary."

Certainly it becomes us, who profess the religion of Christ, to take notice of such astonishing exercises of his power and mercy, and give him the glory which is due, when he begins to accomplish any of his promises concerning the latter days; and it gives us further encouragement to pray, and wait, and hope for the like display of his power in the midst of us. "The hand of God is not shortened, that it cannot save," but we have reason to fear that our iniquities, our coldness in religion, and the general carnality of our spirits, have raised a wall of separation between God and us: and we may add, the pride and perverse humor of infidelity, degeneracy, and apostasy from the Christian faith, which have of late years broken out amongst us, seem to have provoked the Spirit of Christ to absent himself much from our nation. "Return, O Lord, and visit thy churches, and revive thine own work in the midst of us."

From such blessed instances of the success of the gospel, as appear in this narrative, we may learn much of the way of the Spirit of God in his dealing with the souls of men, in order to convince sinners, and restore them to his favor and his image by Jesus Christ, his Son. We aknowledge that some particular appearances in the work of conversion among men may be occasioned by the ministry which they sit under, whether it be of a more or less evangelical strain, whether it be more severe and affrighting, or more gentle and persuasive.

But wheresoever God works with power for salvation upon the minds of men, there will be some discovery of a sense of sin, of the danger of the wrath of God, of the all-sufficiency of his Son Jesus, to relieve us under all our spiritual wants and distresses, and a hearty consent of soul to receive him in the various offices of grace, wherein he is set forth in the holy scriptures. And if our readers had opportunity (as we have had) to peruse several of the sermons which were preached during this glorious season, we should find that it is the common plain *Protestant* doctrine of the reformation, without stretching towards the *Antinomians* on the one side, or the *Arminians* on the other, that the Spirit of God has been pleased to honor with such illustrious success.

We are taught also by this happy event how easy it will be for our blessed Lord to make a full accomplishment of all his predictions concerning his kingdom, and to spread his dominion from sea to sea, through all the nations of the earth. We see how easy it is for him, with one turn of his hand, with one word of his mouth, to awaken whole countries of sleeping sinners, and kindle divine life in their souls. The heavenly influence shall run from door to door, filling the hearts and lips of every inhabitant with importunate inquiries, *What shall we do to be saved?* And *how shall we escape the wrath to come?* And the name of Christ the Savior shall diffuse itself like a rich and vital perfume to multitudes that were ready to sink and perish under the painful sense of their own guilt and danger. Salvation shall spread through all the tribes and ranks of mankind, as the lightning from heaven in a few moments would communicate a living flame through ten thousand lamps or torches placed in a proper situation and neighborhood. Thus "a nation shall be born in a day" when our Redeemer pleases, and his faithful and obedient subjects shall become as numerous as the spires of grass in a meadow newly mown, and refreshed with the showers of heaven. But the pleasure of this agreeable hint bears the mind away from our theme.

Let us return to the present narrative. 'Tis worthy of our observation, that this great and surprising work does not seem to have taken its rise from any sudden and distressing calamity or public terror that might universally impress the minds of a people: here was no storm, no earthquake, no inundation of water, no desolation by fire, no pestilence or any other sweeping distemper, nor any cruel invasion by their Indian neighbors, that might force the inhabitants into a serious thoughtfulness and a religious temper by the fears of approaching death and judgment. Such scenes as these have sometimes been made happily effectual to awaken sinners in Zion, and the formal professor and the hypocrite, have inquired, terrified with

the thoughts of divine wrath breaking in upon them, "Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" But in the present case the immediate hand of God in the work of his Spirit appears much more evident, because there is no such awful and threatening Providence attending it.

It is worthy also of our further notice, that when many profane sinners, and formal professors of religion, have been affrighted out of their present carelessness and stupidity by some astonishing terrors approaching them, those religious appearances have not been so durable, nor the real change of heart so thoroughly effected. Many of these sort of sudden converts have dropt their religious concerns in a great measure when their fears of the threatening calamity are vanished. But it is a blessed confirmation of the truth of this present work of grace, that the persons who were divinely wrought upon in this season continue still to profess serious religion, and to practice it, without returning to their former follies.

It may not be amiss in this place to take notice, that a very surprising and threatening Providence has this last year attended the people of Northampton, among whom this work of divine grace was so remarkable; which Providence at first might have been construed by the unthinking world to be a signal token of God's displeasure against that town, or a judgment from heaven upon the people; but soon afterwards, like Paul's shaking the viper off from his hand, it discovered the astonishing care and goodness of God expressed towards a place where such a multitude of his young converts were assembled: nor can we give a better account of it than in the language of this very gentleman, the Rev. Mr. Edwards, minister of that town, who wrote the following letter, which was published in New England.

"*Northampton, March 19th*, 1737.

"We in this town were the last Lord's day the spectators, and many of us the subjects, of one of the most amazing instances of divine preservation, that perhaps was ever known in the land: our meeting-house is old and decayed, so that we have been for some time building a new one, which is yet unfinished: it has been observed of late, that the house that we have hitherto met in has gradually spread at bottom, the cells and walls giving way, especially in the foreside, by reason of the weight of timber at top pressing on the braces that are inserted into the posts and beams of the house. It has so done more than ordinarily this spring; which seems to have been occasioned by the heaving of the ground by the extreme frosts of the winter past, and it is now settling again on that side

which is next the sun, by the thaws of the spring: by this means the underpinning has been considerably disordered, which people were not sensible of, till the ends of the joists which bore up the front gallery, by the walls giving way, were drawn off from the girts on which they rested; so that in the midst of the public exercise in the forenoon, soon after the beginning of the sermon, the whole gallery full of people, with all the seats and timber, suddenly and without any warning, sunk, and fell down, with most amazing noise, upon the heads of those that sat under, to the astonishment of the congregation, the house being filled with dolorous shrieking and crying; and nothing else was expected than to find many people dead, and dashed to pieces.

"The gallery in falling seemed to break and sink first in the middle; so that those who were upon it were thrown together in heaps before the front door; but the whole was so sudden, that many of them that fell knew nothing in the time of it what it was that had befallen them; and others in the congregation knew not what it was that had happened with so great a noise; many thought it had been an amazing clap of thunder: the falling gallery seemed to be broken all to pieces before it got down; so that some that fell with it, as well as those that were under, were buried in the ruins, and were found pressed under heavy loads of timber, and could do nothing to help themselves.

"But so mysteriously and wonderfully did it come to pass, that every life was preserved; and though many were greatly bruised, and their flesh torn, yet there is not, as I can understand, one bone broken, or so much as put out of joint, among them all: some that were thought to be almost dead at first, are greatly recovered; and but one young woman seems yet to remain in dangerous circumstances, by an inward hurt in her breast; but of late there appears more hope of her recovery.

"There is none can give any account, or conceive by what means it should come to pass, that people's lives and limbs should be thus preserved, when so great a multitude were thus imminently exposed: it looked as though it was impossible it should be otherwise, than that great numbers should instantly be crushed to death or dashed in pieces: it seems unreasonable to ascribe it to any thing else, but the care of Providence in disposing the motions of every stick of timber, and the precise place of safety where every one should sit and fall, when none were in any capacity to take care for their own preservation. The preservation seems to be most wonderful, with respect to the women and children that were in the middle alley, under the

gallery, where it came down first, and with greatest force, and where was nothing to break the force of the falling weight.

"Such an event may be a sufficient argument of a Divine Providence over the lives of men. We thought ourselves called to set apart a day to be spent in the solemn worship of God, to humble ourselves under such a rebuke of God upon us in the time of public service in God's house, by so dangerous and surprising an accident; and to praise his name for so wonderful and as it were miraculous a preservation; and the last Wednnsday was kept by us to that end: and a mercy in which the hand of God is so remarkably evident, may be well worthy to affect the hearts of all that hear it."

Thus far the letter.

But it is time to conclude our preface. If there should be any thing found in this narrative of the surprising conversion of such number of souls, where the sentiments or the style of the relator, or his inferences from matters of fact, do not appear so agreeable to every reader, we hope it will have no unhappy influence to discourage the belief of this glorious event. We must allow every writer his own way; and must allow him to choose what particular instances he would select, from the numerous cases which came before him. And though he might have chosen others, perhaps, of more significancy in the eye of the world, than the *Woman* and the *Child*, whose experiences he relates at large; yet it is evident he chose that of the *Woman*, because she was dead, and she is thereby incapable of knowing any honors or reproaches on this account. And as for the *Child*, those who were present, and saw and heard such a remarkable and lasting change, on one so very young, must necessarily receive a stronger impression from it, and a more agreeable surprise than the mere narration of it can communicate to others at a distance. Children's language always loses its striking beauties at second hand.

Upon the whole, we declare our opinion, that this account of such an extraordinary and illustrious appearance of divine grace in the conversion of sinners, is very like by the blessing of God to have a happy effect towards the honor and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ.

May the worthy writer of this epistle, and all those his Rev. brethren in the ministry, who have been honored in this excellent and important service, go on to see their labors crowned with daily and persevering success! May the numerous subjects of this surprising work hold fast what they have received, and increase in every Christian grace and blessing! May a plentiful effusion of the blessed

Spirit, also, descend on the British Isles, and all their American plantations, to renew the face of religion there! And we intreat our readers in both Englands, to join with us in our hearty addresses to the throne of grace, that this wonderful discovery of the hand of God, in saving sinners, may encourage our faith and hope of the accomplishment of all his words of grace, which are written in the Old Testament and in the New, concerning the large extent of this salvation in the latter days of the world. *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly*, and spread thy dominion through all the ends of the earth. *Amen.*

ISAAC WATTS.
JOHN GUYSE.

London, October 12, 1737.

PREFACE,

BY THE BOSTON MINISTERS.

When the disciples of our glorious Lord were filled with sorrow upon the heavy tidings of his departure from them, he cheered their drooping spirits with that good word, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." And after his ascension, he fulfilled this great and precious promise by the extraordinary effusion of his Spirit, under whose conduct and influence the "apostles went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them:" so that when we read the Acts of the Apostles, we must say; "Not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts." And though, soon after the first days of Christianity, there was a dreadful apostasy, yet God did not wholly take his Spirit from his people; but raised up faithful witnesses, to testify against the heresies and corruptions of the times wherein they lived. And since Antichrist, that wicked one, has been revealed, our Lord, according to his word, has been gradually consuming him with the spirit of his mouth, in the reformation.

Nor have we in these remote corners of the earth, where Satan had his seat from time immemorial, been left without a witness of the divine power and grace. Very remarkable was the work of God's Spirit, stirring up our forefathers to leave a pleasant land, and transport themselves over a vast ocean into this then howling wilderness, that they might enjoy communion with Christ in the purity of his ordinances, and leave their children in the quiet possession of the blessings of his kingdom. And God was eminently present with them by his word and Spirit.

Yea, we need look no higher than our own times, to find abundant occasion to celebrate the wonderful works of God. Thus when God

arose and shook the earth,* his loud call to us in that amazing providence was followed, so far as man can judge, with the still voice of his Spirit, in which he was present to awaken many, and bring them to say trembling, "What must we do to be saved?" Yea, as we hope, to turn not a few from sin to God in a thorough conversion. But when the bitterness of death was past, much the greater part of those whom God's terrors affrighted, gave sad occasion to remember those words, Psalm lxxviii. 34, 36., "When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongue." And there has since been great reason to complain of our speedy return to our former sins, notwithstanding some hopes given of a more general reformation. Yea, when more lately, it pleased God to visit many of our towns with a very mortal distemper, to that time in a manner unknown; whereby great numbers of our hopeful children and youth have been cut off, many very suddenly, and with circumstances exceedingly distressing and awful; yet, alas! we have not generally seen nor duly considered God's hand stretched out against us; but have given him reason to complain, as of his ancient people, "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more." And accordingly his anger is not turned away; but his hand is stretched out still. A plain proof of this awful truth, that the most awakening dispensations can no farther humble and do us good, than as it pleaseth God to accompany them with his Spirit, and so command his blessing upon them. But when the Almighty will work by such means, or without them, who can hinder him? He acts with sovereign liberty and irresistible power. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John iii. 8. Such was his wonderful work at Northampton, and the neighboring towns in the county of Hampshire, and some other places. The Holy Spirit was in a plentiful and extraordinary manner poured out on persons of every age and condition, without such remarkable providences going before to awaken them; as the dew falls in the night, and yet the effects appeared as the light which goeth forth. So that we might well admiring say, what has God wrought! Great was the number of them who published the wonders of the divine power and grace; declaring with humility what God

*The Earthquake of October 29, Anno 1727.

had done for their souls. And others who went among them acknowledged that the work exceeded the fame of it.

Now the Psalmist observes that God has made his wonderful works to be remembered. We therefore apprehend that our Rev. brother has done well to record and publish this surprising work of God ; and the fidelity of his account would not have been at all doubted of by us, though there had not been the concurrent testimony of others to it. It is also a pleasure to us to hear what acceptance the following narrative has found in the other England, where it has had two impressions already, and been honored with a recommendatory preface by two divines of eminent note in London, *viz.* the Rev. Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse : after whom it may seem presumption in us to attempt any thing of this kind. But it having been thought proper to reprint this letter here, and disperse it among our our people, we thankfully embrace this opportunity to praise the Most High for the exceeding riches of his grace, and earnestly to recommend this epistle to the diligent reading and attentive consideration of all into whose hands these shall come. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." And indeed, the particular and distinct account which the author has given of God's dealings with the souls of men, at this remarkable season, in the variety of cases then set before him, and in many of his observations thereupon, we apprehend are written with that judgment and skill in divine things as declare him to be a scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven ; and we judge may be very useful to ministers in leading weary souls to Christ for rest, and for the direction and encouragement of all under the like operations of the Holy Spirit. Yea, as the author observes, "There is no one thing I know of, that God has made such a means of promoting his work among us, as the news of others' conversion." We hope that the further spreading of this narrative may, by the divine blessing, still promote the conversion of souls, and quicken God's children to labor after the clearer evidences of their adoption, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. And as this wonderful work may be considered as an earnest of what God will do towards the close of the gospel day, it affords great encouragement to our faith and prayer in pleading those promises which relate to the glorious extent and flourishing of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, and that have not yet had their full and final accomplishment. And surely the very threatening degeneracy of our times calls aloud to us all, to be earnest in prayer for this most needed blessing, the plentiful effusion of the Spirit of truth and holiness. Nor ought the sense of our own unworthiness discourage us, when we go to our heavenly Father in the name of his dear Son,

who has purchased and received this great gift for his people, and says to us, "Ask, and it shall be given you. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Luke xi. 9—13.

But we must draw to a close. May the worthy author be restored to health, and long continue to be a rich blessing to his people! May he still see the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hand; and in particular, may the Spirit of grace accompany this pious endeavor to spread the savor of the knowledge of Christ, for the everlasting advantage of many! May it please God to revive his work throughout this land; and may all the ends of the earth see his salvation!

Boston, November 4th, 1738.

JOSEPH SEWALL,
Minister of Old South Church.

THOMAS PRINCE,
Minister of Old South Church.

JOHN WEBB,
Minister of New North Church.

WILLIAM COOPER,
Minister of Brattle street Church.

P. S. Since the writing this Preface, one of us has received a letter from a Reverend and very worthy minister in Glasgow, in which is the following passage:

"The friends of serious religion here were much refreshed with a printed account of the extraordinary success of the gospel, of late, in some parts of New England. If you can favor me with more particular accounts of those joyful events, when you have opportunity of writing to me, it will much oblige me."

TO THE

REV. BENJAMIN COLMAN, D. D.

PASTOR OF A CHURCH IN BOSTON.

Westfield, October 11, 1738.

Sir,

In your letter of August 19, you inform us that the Rev. Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse desire that some other ministers, who were eye and ear witnesses to some of those numerous conversions in the other towns about Northampton, would attest unto what the Rev. Mr. Edwards has written of them.

We take this opportunity to assure you, that the account Mr. Edwards has given in his narrative of our several towns or parishes is true; and that much more of the like nature might have been added with respect to some of them.

We are, Rev. Sir, your brethren and servants,

WILLIAM WILLIAMS, Pastor of Hatfield.
EBENEZER DEVOTION, " of Suffield.
STEPHEN WILLIAMS, " of Long Meadow.
PETER RAYNOLDS, " of Enfield.
NEHEMIAH BULL, " of Westfield.
SAMUEL HOPKINS, " of West Springfield.

A FAITHFUL NARRATIVE.

LETTER TO REV. DR. COLMAN.

Reverend and Honored Sir,

HAVING seen your letter to my honored uncle Williams of Hatfield, of July 20, wherein you inform him of the notice that has been taken of the late wonderful work of God, in this, and some other towns in this county, by the Rev. Dr. Watts, and Dr. Guyse of London, and the congregation to which the last of these preached on a monthly day of solemn prayer; as also, of your desire to be more perfectly acquainted with it, by some of us on the spot; and having been since informed by my uncle Williams, that you desire me to undertake it, I would now do it, in as just and faithful a manner as in me lies.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory Statement.

THE people of the county, in general, I suppose, are as sober, and orderly, and good sort of people, as in any part of New England; and I believe they have been preserved the freest by far, of any part of the country, from error, and variety of sects and opinions. Our being so far within the land, at a distance from sea-ports, and in a corner of the country, has doubtless been one reason why we have not been so much

corrupted with vice, as most other parts. But without question, the religion and good order of the county, and their purity in doctrine, has, under God, been very much owing to the great abilities and eminent piety of my venerable and honored grandfather Stoddard. I suppose we have been the freest of any part of the land from unhappy divisions, and quarrels in our ecclesiastical and religious affairs, till the late lamentable Springfield contention.*

We being much separated from other parts of the province, and having comparatively but little intercourse with them, have from the beginning, till now, always managed our ecclesiastical affairs within ourselves: it is the way in which the county, from its infancy, has gone on, by the practical agreement of all, and the way in which our peace and good order has hitherto been maintained.

The town of Northampton is of about eighty-two years standing, and has now about two hundred families; which mostly dwell more compactly together than any town of such a bigness in these parts of the country; which probably has been an occasion that both our corruptions, and reformations have been, from time to time, the more swiftly propagated, from one to another, through the town. Take the town in general, and so far as I can judge, they are as rational and understanding a people as most I have been acquainted with: Many of them have been noted for religion, and particularly, have been remarkable for their distinct knowledge in things that relate to heart religion, and Christian experience, and their great regards thereto.

I am the third minister that has been settled in the town: the Rev. Mr. Eleazer Mather, who was the first, was ordained in July, 1669. He was one whose heart was much in his work, abundant in labors for the good of precious souls: he

* The Springfield contention relates to the settlement of a minister there, which occasioned too warm debates between some, both pastors and people, that were for it, and others that were against it, on acconnt of their different apprehensions about his principles, and about some steps that were taken to procure his ordination.

had the high esteem and great love of his people, and was blest with no small success. The Rev. Mr. Stoddard, who succeeded him, came first to the town the November after his death, but was not ordained till September 11th, 1672, and died February 11th, 1728–9. So that he continued in the work of the ministry here, from his first coming to town, near sixty years. And as he was eminent and renowned for his gifts and graces so he was blest, from the beginning, with extraordinary success in his ministry, in the conversion of many souls. He had five harvests, as he called them: The first was about fifty-seven years ago; the second about fifty-three years; the third about forty; and the fourth about twenty-four; the fifth and last about eighteen years ago. Some of these times were much more remarkable than others, and the ingathering of souls more plentiful. Those that are about fifty-three and forty, and twenty-four years ago, were much greater than either the first or the last: but in each of them, I have heard my grandfather say, the larger part of the young people in the town seemed to be mainly concerned for their eternal salvation.

After the last of these came a far more degenerate time, (at least among the young people,) I suppose, than ever before. Mr. Stoddard, indeed, had the comfort before he died, of seeing a time where there were no small appearances of a divine work among some, and a considerable ingathering of souls, even after I was settled with him in the ministry, which was about two years before his death; and I have reason to bless God for the great advantage I had by it. In these two years there were nearly twenty that Mr. Stoddard hoped to be savingly converted; but there was nothing of any general awakening. The greater part seemed to be at that time very insensible of the things of religion, and engaged in other cares and pursuits. Just after my grandfather's death, it seemed to be a time of extraordinary dullness in religion: licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town: they were many of them very much ad-

dicted to night-walking, and frequenting the tavern, and lewd practices, wherein some by their example exceedingly corrupted others. It was their manner very frequently to get together, in conventions of both sexes, for mirth and jollity, which they called frolicks; and they would often spend a greater part of the night in them, without regard to any order in the families they belonged to: and indeed family government did too much fail in the town. It was become very customary with many of our young people to be indecent in their carriage at meeting, which doubtless would not have prevailed to such a degree, had it not been that my grandfather through his great age (though he retained his powers surprisingly to the last) was not so able to observe them. There had also long prevailed in the town, a spirit of contention between two parties, into which they had for many years been divided, by which was maintained a jealousy one of the other, and they were prepared to oppose one another in all public affairs.

But in two or three years after Mr. Stoddard's death, there began to be a sensible amendment of these evils; the young people showed more of a disposition to hearken to counsel, and by degrees left off their frolicking, and grew observedly more decent in their attendance on the public worship, and there were more that manifested a religious concern than there used to be.

At the latter end of the year 1733, there appeared a very unusual flexibleness, and yielding to advice in our young people. It had been too long their manner to make the evening after the sabbath,* and after our public lecture, to be especially the times of their mirth and company keeping. But a sermon was now preached on the sabbath before the lecture, to show the evil tendency of the practice, and to persuade them to reform it; and it was argued on heads of families, that it should be a thing agreed upon among them to govern their families, and keep their children at home at

* It must be noted, that it has never been our manner to observe the evening that follows the sabbath; but that which precedes it, as a part of the holy time

these times; and withal it was more privately moved that they should meet together the next day, in their several neighborhoods, to know each other's minds, which was accordingly done, and the motion complied with throughout the town. But parents found little or no occasion for the exercise of government in the case; the young people declared themselves convinced by what they had heard from the pulpit, and were willing of themselves to comply with the counsel that had been given; and it was immediately, and I suppose almost universally, complied with; and there was a thorough reformation of these disorders thenceforward, which has continued ever since.

Presently after this, there began to appear a remarkable religious concern at a little village, belonging to the congregation, called Pascommuck, where a few families were settled, at about three miles distance from the main body of the town. At this place, a number of persons seemed to be savingly wrought upon. In the April following, A. D. 1734, there happened a very sudden and awful death of a young man, in the bloom of his youth; who being violently seized with a pleurisy, and taken immediately very delirious, died in about two days; which (together with what was preached publicly on that occasion) much affected many young people. This was followed with another death of a young married woman, who had been considerably exercised in mind about the salvation of her soul before she was ill, and was in great distress in the beginning of her illness; but seemed to have satisfying evidences of God's saving mercy to her, before her death; so that she died very full of comfort, in a most earnest and moving manner warning and counseling others. This seemed much to contribute to the solemnizing of the spirits of many young persons: and there began evidently to appear more of a religious concern on people's minds.

In the fall of the year I proposed to the young people, that they should agree among themselves to spend the evenings after lectures in social religion, and to that end divide themselves into several companies, to meet in various parts of the

town; which was accordingly done, and those meetings have been since continued, and the example imitated by elder people. This was followed with the death of an elderly person, which was attended with many unusual circumstances, by which many were much moved and affected.

About this time began the great noise that was in this part of the country about Arminianism, which seemed to appear with a very threatening aspect upon the interest of religion here. The friends of vital piety trembled for fear of the issue; but it seemed, contrary to their fear, strongly to be overruled, for the promoting of religion. Many who looked on themselves as in a Christless condition, seemed to be awakened by it, with fear that God was about to withdraw from the land, and that we should be given up to heterodoxy, and corrupt principles; and that then their opportunity for obtaining salvation would be past; and many who were brought a little to doubt about the truth of the doctrines they had hitherto been taught, seemed to have a kind of a trembling fear with their doubts, lest they should be led into by-paths, to their eternal undoing: and they seemed, with much concern and engagedness of mind, to inquire what was indeed the way in which they must come to be accepted with God. There were then some things said publicly on that occasion concerning "Justification by Faith alone."

Although great fault was found with meddling with the controversy in the pulpit, by such a person, and at that time, and though it was ridiculed by many elsewhere, yet it proved a word spoken in season here; and was most evidently attended with a very remarkable blessing of Heaven to the souls of the people in this town. They received thence a general satisfaction with respect to the main thing in question, which they had been in trembling doubts and concern about; and their minds were engaged the more earnestly to seek that they might come to be accepted of God, and saved in the way of the gospel, which had been made evident to them to be the true and only way. And then it was, in the latter part of December, that the Spirit of God began extra-

ordinarily to set in and wonderfully to work among us; and there were, very suddenly, one after another, five or six persons who were to all appearance savingly converted, and some of them wrought upon in a very remarkable manner.

Particularly, I was surprised with the relation of a young woman, who had been one of the greatest company-keepers in the whole town: when she came to me I had never heard that she was become in any wise serious, but by the conversation I then had with her, it appeared to me that what she gave an account of, was a glorious work of God's infinite power and sovereign grace; and that God had given her a new heart, truly broken and sanctified. I could not then doubt of it, and have seen much in my acquaintance with her since to confirm it.

Though the work was glorious, yet I was filled with concern about the effect it might have upon others. I was ready to conclude (though too rashly) that some would be hardened by it in carelessness and looseness of life; and would take occasion from it to open their mouths in reproaches of religion. But the event was the reverse to a wonderful degree: God made it, I suppose, the greatest occasion of awakening to others of any thing that ever came to pass in the town. I have had abundant opportunity to know the effect it had, by my private conversation with many. The news of it seemed almost like a flash of lightning upon the hearts of young people all over the town, and upon many others. Those persons among us who used to be farthest from seriousness, and that I most feared would make an ill improvement of it, seemed greatly to be awakened with it; many went to talk with her, concerning what she had met with; and what appeared in her seemed to be to the satisfaction of all that did so.

Presently upon this, a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion, and the eternal world, became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all degrees, and all ages: the noise among the dry bones waxed

louder and louder. All other talk but about spiritual and eternal things was soon thrown by; all the conversation in all companies, and upon all occasions, was upon these things only, unless so much as was necessary for people to carry on their secular business. Other discourse than of the things of religion would scarcely be tolerated in any company. The minds of people were wonderfully taken off from the world; it was treated among us as a thing of very little consequence: they seemed to follow their worldly business more as a part of their duty than from any disposition they had to it. The temptation now seemed to lie on that hand, to neglect worldly affairs too much, and to spend too much time in the immediate exercise of religion; which thing was exceedingly misrepresented by reports that were spread in distant parts of the land, as though the people here had wholly thrown by all worldly business, and betook themselves entirely to reading and praying, and such like religious exercises.

But although people did not ordinarily neglect their worldly business, yet there then was the reverse of what commonly is: religion was with all sorts the great concern, and the world was a thing only by the by. The only thing in their view was to get the kingdom of heaven, and every one appeared pressing into it. The engagedness of their hearts in this great concern could not be hid; it appeared in their very countenances. It then was a dreadful thing among us to lie out of Christ, in danger every day of dropping into hell: and what persons' minds were intent upon, was to escape for their lives, and to "fly from the wrath to come." All would eagerly lay hold of opportunities for their souls, and were wont very often to meet together in private houses for religious purposes; and such meetings, when appointed, were wont greatly to be thronged.

There was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those that were wont to be the vainest and loosest, and those that had been the most disposed to

think and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more; souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought "out of darkness into marvelous light," and delivered "out of a horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and set upon a rock, with a new song of praise to God in their mouths."

This work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious alteration in the town; so that in the spring and summer following, A. D. 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God. It never was so full of love, nor so full of joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families, on the account of salvation being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands. The goings of God were then seen in his sanctuary; God's day was a delight, and his tabernacles were amiable. Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's service, every one earnestly intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were, from time to time, in tears while the word was preached; some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors.

Our public praises were then greatly enlivened; God was then served in our psalmody, in some measure, in the beauty of holiness. It has been observable, that there has been scarce any part of divine worship wherein good men among us have had grace so drawn forth, and their hearts so lifted up in the ways of God, as in singing his praises. Our con-

gregation excelled all that ever I knew in the external part of the duty before, the men generally carrying regularly and well three parts of music, and the women a part by themselves; but now they were evidently wont to sing with unusual elevation of heart and voice, which made the duty pleasant indeed.

In all companies in other days, on whatever occasions persons met together, Christ was to be heard of and seen in the midst of them. Our young people, when they met, were wont to spend the time in talking of the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ, the gloriousness of the way of salvation, the wonderful, free, and sovereign grace of God, his glorious work in the conversion of a soul, the truth and certainty of the great things of God's word, the sweetness of the views of his perfections, &c. And even at weddings, which formerly were merely occasions of mirth and jollity, there was now no discourse of any thing but the things of religion, and no appearance of any but spiritual mirth.

Those among us that had been formerly converted were greatly enlivened and renewed with fresh and extraordinary incomes of the Spirit of God; though some much more than others, "according to the measures of the gift of Christ:" Many that before had labored under difficulties about their own state, had now their doubts removed by more satisfying experience, and more clear discoveries of God's love.

When this work of God first appeared, and was so extraordinarily carried on among us in the winter, others round about us, seemed not to know what to make of it; and there were many that scoffed at and ridiculed it; and some compared what we called conversion, to certain distempers. But it was very observable of many that occasionally came among us from abroad with disregardful hearts, that what they saw here cured them of such a temper of mind: Strangers were generally surprised to find things so much beyond what they had heard, and were wont to tell others that the state of the town could not be conceived of by those that had

not seen it. The notice that was taken of it by the people that came to town on occasion of the court, that sat here in the beginning of March, was very observable. And those that came from the neighborhood to our public lectures were for the most part remarkably affected. Many that came to town, on one occasion or other, had their consciences smitten and awakened, and went home with those impressions that never wore off till they had hopefully a saving issue; and those that before had serious thoughts, had their awakenings and convictions greatly increased. And there were many instances of persons that came from abroad, on visits, or on business, that had not been long here before to all appearance they were savingly wrought upon, and partook of that shower of divine blessing that God rained down here, and went home rejoicing; till at length the same work began evidently to appear and prevail in several other towns in the county.

In the month of March, the people in South Hadley began to be seized with deep concern about the tidings of religion; which very soon became universal. And the work of God has been very wonderful there; not much, if any thing, short of what it has been here, in proportion to the size of the place. About the same time it began to break forth in the west part of Suffield, (where it has also been very great,) and it soon spread into all parts of the town. It next appeared at Sunderland, and soon overspread the town: and I believe it was, for a season, not less remarkable than it was here. About the same time, it began to appear in a part of Deerfield, called Green river, and afterwards filled the town, and there has been a glorious work there: it began also to be manifest in the south part of Hatfield, in a place called the Hill, and after that the whole town, in the second week in April, seemed to be seized, as it were at once, with concern about the things of religion; and the work of God has been great there. There has been also a very general awakening at West Springfield, and Long Meadow;

and in Enfield there was for a time no small concern among some that before had very loose persons. About the same time that this appeared at Enfield, the Rev. Mr. Bull, of Westfield, informed me, that there had been a great alteration there, and that more had been done in one week there than in seven years before. Something of this work likewise appeared in the first precinct in Springfield, principally in the north and south extremities of the parish. And in Hadley, old town, there gradually appeared so much of a work of God on souls as at another time would have been thought worthy of much notice. For a short time there was also a very great and general concern of the like nature at Northfield. And wherever this concern appeared, it seemed not to be in vain: but in every place God brought saving blessings with him, and his word attended with his Spirit (as we have all reason to think) returned not void. It might well be said at that time in all parts of the country, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?"

As what other towns heard of and found in this, was a great means of awakening them; so our hearing of such a swift and extraordinary propagation, and extent of this work, did doubtless for a time serve to uphold the work among us. The continual news kept alive the talk of religion, and did greatly quicken and rejoice the hearts of God's people, and much awakened those that looked on themselves as still left behind, and made them the more earnest that they also might share in the great blessings that others had obtained.

This remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God, which thus extended from one end to the other of this county, was not confined to it, but many places in Connecticut have partook in the same mercy: as for instance the first parish in Windsor, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Marsh, was thus blest about the same time as we in Northampton, while we had no knowledge of each other's circumstances: there has been a very great ingathering of souls to Christ in that

place, and something considerable of the same work begun afterwards in East Windsor, my honored father's parish, which has in times past been a place favored with mercies of this nature above any on this western side of New England, excepting Northampton; there having been four or five seasons of the pouring out of the Spirit to the general awakening of the people there, since my father's settlement among them.

There was also the last spring and summer a wonderful work of God carried on at Coventry under the mintstry of the Rev. Mr. Meacham: I had opportunity to converse with some of Coventry people, who gave me a very remarkable account of the surprising change that appeared in the most rude and vicious persons there. The like was also very great at the same time in a part of Lebanon, called the Crank, where the Rev. Mr. Wheelock, a young gentleman, is lately settled: and there has been much of the same at Durham, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Chauncey; and to appearance no small ingathering of souls there. And likewise among many of the young people in the first precinct in Stratford under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Gould, where the work was much promoted by the remarkable conversion of a young woman that had been a great company keeper, as it was here.

Something of this work has appeared in other towns in those parts, as I was informed when I was there the last fall. And we have since been acquainted with something very remarkable of this nature at another parish in Stratford, called Ripton, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Mills. And there was a considerable revival of religion last summer at New Haven, old town, as I was once and again informed by the Rev. Mr. Noyes, the minister there, and by others; and by a letter which I very lately received from Mr. Noyes, and also by information we have had otherwise, this flourishing of religion still continues, and has lately much increased. Mr. Noyes writes, that many this summer have

been added to the church, and particularly mentions several young persons that belong to the principal families of that town.

There has been a degree of the same work at a part of Guilford; and very considerable at Mansfield, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Eleazer Williams; and an unusual religious concern at Tolland; and something of it at Hebron, and Bolton. There was also no small effusion of the Spirit of God in the North Parish in Preston, in the eastern part of Connecticut, which I was informed of, and saw something of it, when I was the last autumn at the house, and in the congregation of the Rev. Mr. Lord, the minister there; who, with the Rev. Mr. Owen of Groton, came up hither in May, the last year, on purpose to see the work of God here; and having heard various and contradictory accounts of it, were careful when they were here to inform and satisfy themselves; and to that end particularly conversed with many of our people; which they declared to be entirely to their satisfaction, and that the one half had not been told them, nor could be told them. Mr. Lord told me that when he got home he informed his congregation of what he had seen, and that they were greatly affected with it, and that it proved the beginning of the same work among them, which prevailed till there was a general awakening, and many instances of persons who seemed to be remarkably converted. I also have lately heard that there has been something of the same work at Woodbury.

But this shower of divine blessing has been yet more extensive. There was no small degree of it in some parts of the Jerseys, as I was informed when I was at New York (in a long journey I took at that time of the year for my health) by some people of the Jerseys, whom I saw. Especially the Rev. William Tennent, a minister who seemed to have such things much at heart, told me of a very great awakening of many in a place called the Mountains, under the ministry of one Mr. Cross; and of a very considerable revival of religion

in another place under the ministry of his brother, the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent; and also at another place under the ministry of a very pious young gentleman, a Dutch minister, whose name, as I remember, was Freelinghousa.

This seems to have been a very extraordinary dispensation of providence: God has in many respects gone out of, and much beyond, his usual and ordinary way. The work in this town, and some others about us, has been extraordinary on account of the universality of it, affecting all sorts, sober and vicious, high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise; it reached the most considerable families and persons, to all appearance, as much as others. In former stirrings of this nature, the bulk of the young people have been greatly affected, but old men and little children have been so now. Many of the last have, of their own accord, formed themselves into religious societies, in different parts of the town. A loose, careless person could scarcely find a companion in the whole neighborhood; and if there was any one that seemed to remain senseless or unconcerned, it would be spoken of as a strange thing.

This dispensation has also appeared very extraordinary in the numbers of those on whom we have reason to hope it has had a saving effect. We have about six hundred and twenty communicants, which include almost all our adult persons. The church was very large before, but persons never thronged into it as they did in the late extraordinary time. Our sacraments are eight weeks asunder, and I received into our communion about a hundred before one sacrament, and fourscore of them at one time, whose appearance when they presented themselves together to make an open, explicit profession of Christianity, was very affecting to the congregation. I took in near sixty before the next sacrament day; and I had very sufficient evidence of the conversion of their souls, through divine grace.

I am far from pretending to be able to determine how many have lately been the subjects of such mercy; but if I

may be allowed to declare any thing that appears to me probable in a thing of this nature, I hope that more than three hundred souls were savingly brought home to Christ in this town in the space of half a year, (how many more I don't guess,) and about the same number of males as females; which by what I have heard Mr. Stoddard say, was far from what has been usual in years past, for he observed that in his time many more women were converted than men. Those of our young people that are on other accounts most likely and considerable, are mostly, as I hope, truly pious, and leading persons in ways of religion. Those that were formerly loose young persons, are generally, to all appearance, become true lovers of God and Christ, and spiritual in their dispositions. And I hope that by far the greater part of persons in this town above sixteen years of age, are such as have the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and so by what I heard, I suppose it is in some other places, particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley.

This has also appeared to be a very extraordinary dispensation, in that the Spirit of God has so much extended not only his awakening, but regenerating influences both to elderly persons, and also to those that are very young. It has been a thing heretofore rarely to be heard of, that any were converted past middle age; but now we have the same ground to think that many such have in this time been savingly changed, as that others have been so in more early years. I suppose there were upwards of fifty persons converted in this town above forty years of age; and more than twenty of them above fifty, and above ten of them above sixty, and two of them above seventy years of age.

It has heretofore been looked on as a strange thing, when any had seemed to be savingly wrought upon, and remarkably changed in their childhood; but now I suppose, near thirty were to appearance so wrought upon, between ten and fourteen years of age, and two between nine and ten, and one of about four years of age; and because I suppose this

last will be with most difficulty believed, I will hereafter give a particular account of it. The influences of God's Spirit have also been very remarkable on children in some other places, particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley, and the west part of Suffield. There are several families in this town that are all hopefully pious; yea, there are several numerous families, in which I think we have reason to hope that all the children are truly godly, and most of them lately become so: and there are very few houses in the whole town, into which salvation has not come in one or more instances. There are several negroes, that from what was seen in them then, and what is discernible in them since, appear to have been truly born again in the late remarkable season.

God has seemed to have gone out of his usual way, in the quickness of his work, and the swift progress his Spirit has made in his operations on the hearts of many. It is wonderful that persons should be so suddenly, and yet so greatly changed. Many have been taken from a loose and careless way of living, and seized with strong convictions of their guilt and misery, and in a very little time old things have passed away, and all things have become new with them.

God's work has also appeared very extraordinary in the degrees of the influences of his Spirit, both in the degree of awakening and conviction, and also in the degree of saving light, and love, and joy, that many have experienced. It has also been very extraordinary in the extent of it, and its being so swiftly propagated from town to town. In former times of the pouring out of the Spirit of God on this town, though in some of them it is very remarkable, yet it reached no further than this town; the neighboring towns all around continued unmoved.

The work of God's Spirit seemed to be at its greatest height in this town, in the former part of the spring, in March and April, at which time God's work in the conversion of souls was carried on among us in so wonderful a manner, that so far as I, by looking back, can judge from the particu-

lar acquaintance I have had with souls in this work, it appears to me probable to have been at the rate at least of four persons in a day, or near thirty in a week, take one with another, for five or six weeks together. When God in so remarkable a manner took the work into his own hands, there was as much done in a day or two, as at ordinary times with all endeavors that men can use, and with such a blessing as we commonly have, is done in a year.

I am very sensible how apt many would be if they should see the account I have here given, presently to think with themselves that I am very fond of making a great many converts, and of magnifiying and aggrandizing the matter; and to think that, for want of judgment, I take every religious pang, and enthusiastic conceit, for saving conversion; and I don't much wonder if they should be apt to think so: and for this reason I have forborne to publish an account of this great work of God, though I have often been put upon it; but having now as I thought a special call to give an account of it, upon mature consideration I thought it might not be beside my duty to declare this amazing work, as it appeared to me, to be indeed divine, and to conceal no part of the glory of it, leaving it with God to take care of the credit of his own work, and running the venture of any censorious thoughts which might be entertained of me to my disadvantage: but that distant persons may be under as great advantage as may be, to judge for themselves of this matter, I would be a little more large and particular.

CHAPTER II.

The manner of conversion various, yet bearing a great resemblance.

I THEREFORE proceed to give an account of the manner of persons being wrought upon; and here there is a vast variety.

perhaps as manifold as the subjects of the operation; but yet in many things there is a great analogy in all.

Persons are first awakened with a sense of their miserable condition by nature, the danger they are in of perishing eternally, and that it is of great importance to them that they speedily escape, and get into a better state. Those that before were secure and senseless, are made sensible how much they were in the way to ruin in their former courses. Some are more suddenly seized with convictions; it may be by the news of others' conversion, or something they hear in public or in private conference; their consciences are suddenly smitten as if their hearts were pierced through with a dart: Others have awakenings that come upon them more gradually; they begin at first to be something more thoughtful and considerate, so as to come to a conclusion in their minds, that it is their best and wisest way to delay no longer, but to improve the present opportunity; and have accordingly set themselves seriously to meditate on those things that have the most awakening tendency, on purpose to obtain convictions: and so their awakenings have increased, till a sense of their misery, by God's Spirit setting in therewith, has had fast hold of them. Others that, before this wonderful time, had been somewhat religious and concerned for their salvation, have been awakened in a new manner, and made sensible that their slack and dull way of seeking was never like to attain their purpose; and so have been roused up to a greater violence for the kingdom of heaven.

These awakenings, when they have first seized on persons, have had two effects: one was, that they have brought them immediately to quit their sinful practices, and the looser sort have been brought to forsake and dread their former vices and extravagancies. When once the Spirit of God began to be so wonderfully poured out in a general way through the town, people had soon done with their old quarrels, backbitings, and intermeddling with other men's matters; the tavern was soon left empty, and persons kept very

much at home; none went abroad, unless on necessary business, or on some religious account, and every day seemed in many respects like a sabbath day. And the other effect was, that it put them on earnest application to the means of salvation, reading, prayer, meditation, the ordinances of God's house, and private conference; their cry was, "What shall we do to be saved?" The place of resort was now altered; it was no longer the tavern, but the minister's house, that was thronged far more than ever the tavern had been wont to be.

There is a very great variety as to the degree of fear and trouble that persons are exercised with before they obtain any comfortable evidences of pardon and acceptance with God: some are from the beginning carried on with abundantly more encouragement and hope than others: some have had ten times less trouble of mind than others, in whom yet the issue seems to be the same. Some have had such a sense of the displeasure of God, and the great danger they were in of damnation, that they could not sleep at night; and many have said that when they have laid down, the thoughts of sleeping in such a condition have been frightful to them, and they have scarcely been free from terror while they have been asleep, and they have awaked with fear, heaviness, and distress still abiding on their spirits. It has been very common that the deep and fixed concern that has been on person's minds has had a painful influence on their bodies, and has given disturbance to animal nature.

The awful apprehensions persons have had of their misery, have for the most part been increasing, the nearer they have approached to deliverance; though they often pass through many changes and alterations in the frame and circumstances of their minds. Sometimes they think themselves wholly senseless, and fear that the Spirit of God has left them, and that they are given up to judicial hardness; yet they appear very deeply exercised about that fear, and are in great earnest to obtain convictions again.

Together with those fears, and that exercise of mind which is rational, and which they have just ground for, they have often suffered many needless distresses of thought, in which Satan probably has a great hand, to entangle them and block up their way: and sometimes the distemper of melancholy has been evidently mixed; of which, when it happens, the tempter seems to make great advantage, and puts an unhappy bar in the way of any good effect. One knows not how to deal with such persons; they turn every thing that is said to them the wrong way, and most to their own disadvantage; and there is nothing that the devil seems to make so great a handle of, as a melancholy humor, unless it be the real corruption of the heart.

But it has been very remarkable that there has been far less of this mixture in this time of extraordinary blessing than there was wont to be in persons under awakenings at other times: for it is evident that many that before had been exceedingly involved in such difficulties seemed now strangely to be set at liberty. Some persons that had before, for a long time, been exceedingly extangled with peculiar temptations, of one sort or other, and unprofitable and hurtful distresses, were soon helped over former stumbling blocks, that hindered any progress toward saving good; and convictions have wrought more kindly, and they have been successfully carried on in the way to life. And thus Satan seemed to be restrained, till towards the latter end of this wonderful time, when God's Spirit was about to withdraw.

Many times persons under great awakenings were concerned, because they thought they were not awakened, but miserable, hard-hearted, senseless, sottish creatures still, and sleeping upon the brink of hell. The sense of the need they have to be awakened, and of their comparative hardness, grows upon them with their awakenings; so that they seem to themselves to be very senseless, when indeed most sensible. There have been some instances of persons that have had as great a sense of their danger and misery as their

natures could well subsist under, so that a little more would probably have destroyed them; and yet they have expressed themselves much amazed at their own insensibility and sottishness, in such an extraordinary time as it then was.

Persons are sometimes brought to the borders of despair, and it looks as black as midnight to them a little before the day dawns in their souls; some few instances there have been of persons who have had such a sense of God's wrath for sin, that they have been overborne and made to cry out under an astonishing sense of their guilt, wondering that God suffers such guilty wretches to live upon earth, and that he doth not immediately send them to hell; and sometimes their guilt does so glare them in the face that they are in exceeding terror for fear that God will instantly do it; but more commonly the distresses under legal awakenings have not been to such a degree. In some, these terrors do not seem to be so sharp, when near comfort, as before; their convictions have not seemed to work so much that way, but they seem to be led further down into their own hearts, to a further sense of their own universal depravity, and deadness in sin.

The corruption of the heart has discovered itself in various exercises in the time of legal convictions; sometimes it appears in a great struggle, like something roused by an enemy, and Satan, the old inhabitant, seems to exert himself, like a serpent disturbed and enraged. Many in such circumstances have felt a great spirit of envy towards the godly, especially towards those that are thought to have been lately converted, and most of all towards acquaintance and companions, when they are thought to be converted. Indeed, some have felt many heart-risings against God, and murmurings at his ways of dealing with mankind, and his dealings with themselves in particular. It has been much insisted on, both in public and private, that persons should have the utmost dread of such envious thoughts, which, if allowed, tend exceedingly to quench the Spirit of God, if not

to provoke him finally to forsake them. And when such a spirit has much prevailed, and persons have not so earnestly strove against it as they ought to have done, it has seemed to be exceedingly to the hindrance of the good of their souls; but in some other instances, where persons have been much terrified at the sight of such wickedness in their hearts, God has brought good to them out of evil; and made it a means of convincing them of their own desperate sinfulness, and bringing them off from all self-confidence.

The drift of the Spirit of God in his legal strivings with persons, has seemed most evidently to be, to make way for, and to bring to, a conviction of their absolute dependence on his sovereign power and grace, and a universal necessity of a Mediator, by leading them more and more to a sense of their exceeding wickedness and guiltiness in his sight; the pollution and insufficiency of their own righteousness, that they can in no wise help themselves, and that God would be wholly just and righteous in rejecting them, and all that they do, and in casting them off forever: though there be a vast variety, as to the manner and distinctness of persons' convictions of these things.

As they are gradually more and more convinced of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts, they seem to themselves to grow worse and worse, harder and blinder, and more desperately wicked, instead of growing better; they are ready to be discourged by it, and oftentimes never think themselves so far off from good, as when they are nearest. Under the sense which the Spirit of God gives them of their sinfulness, they often think that they differ from all others; their hearts are ready to sink with the thought that they are the worst of all, and and that none ever obtained mercy that were so wicked as they.

When awakenings first begin, their consciences are commonly most exercised about their outward vicious course, or other acts of sin; but afterwards are much more burdened with a sense of heart-sins, the dreadful corruption of their

nature, their enmity against God, the pride of their hearts, their unbelief, their rejection of Christ, the stubbornness and obstinacy of their wills; and the like. In many, God makes much use of their own experience, in the course of their awakenings and endeavors after saving good, to convince them of their own vileness and universal depravity.

Very often under first awakenings, when they are brought to reflect on the sin of their past lives, and have something of a terrifying sense of God's anger, they set themselves to walk more strictly, and confess their sins and perform many religious duties, with a secret hope of appeasing God's anger and making up for the sins they have committed: and oftentimes, at first setting out, their affections are moved, and they are full of tears in their confessions and prayers, which they are ready to make very much of, as though they were some atonement, and had power to move correspondent affections in God too: and hence they are for a while big with expectation of what God will do for them; and conceive that they grow better apace, and shall soon be thoroughly converted. But these affections are but short lived; they quickly find that they fail, and then they think themselves to be grown worse again: they don't find such a prospect of being soon converted, as they thought: instead of being nearer, they seem to be farther off; their hearts they think are grown harder, and by this means their fears of perishing greatly increase. But though they are disappointed, they renew their attempts again and again; and still as their attempts are multiplied so are their disappointments; all fails, they see no token of having inclined God's heart to them, they don't see that he hears their prayers at all, as they expected he would; and sometimes there have been great temptations arising hence to leave off seeking, and to yield up the case. But as they are still more terrified with fears of perishing, and their former hopes of prevailing on God to be merciful to them in a great measure fail; sometimes their religious affections have turned into heart-risings

against God, because that he does not pity them, and seems to have little regard to their distress, and piteous cries, and to all the pains that they take ; they think of the mercy that God has shown to others, how soon, and how easily others have obtained comfort, and those too that were worse than they, and have not labored so much as they have done, and sometimes they have had even dreadful blasphemous thoughts, in these circumstances.

But when they reflect on these wicked workings of heart against God, if their convictions are continued, and the Spirit of God is not provoked utterly to forsake them, they have more distressing apprehensions of the anger of God towards those whose hearts work after such a sinful maner about him ; and it may be have great fears that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that God will surely never show mercy to them that are such vipers ; and are often tempted to leave off in despair. But then perhaps, by something they read or heard of the infinite mercy of God, and all-sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners, they have some encouragement and hope renewed ; but think that as yet they are not fit to come to Christ; they were so wicked that Christ will never accept of them : and then it may be they set themselves upon a new course of fruitless endeavors in their own strength to make themselves better, and still meet with new disappointments. They are earnest to inquire what they shall do ? They do not know but there is something else to be done in order to their obtaining converting grace, that they have never done yet. It may be they hope that they are something better than they were ; but then the pleasing dream all vanishes again. If they are told that they trust too much to their own strength and righteousness, they go about to strive to bring themselves off from it, and it may be think they have done it, when they only do the same thing under a new disguise, and still find no appearance of any good, but all looks as dark as midnight to them. Thus they wander about from mountain to hill, seeking rest and finding

none; when they are beat out of one refuge they fly to another, till they are as it were debilitated, broken, and subdued with legal humblings; in which God gives them a conviction of their own utter helplessness and insufficiency, and discovers the true remedy.

When they begin to seek salvation, they are commonly profoundly ignorant of themselves; they are not sensible how blind they are, and how little they can do towards bringing themselves to see spiritual things aright, and towards putting forth gracious exercises in their own souls: they are not sensible how remote they are from love to God, and other holy dispositions, and how dead they are in sin. When they see unexpected pollution in their own hearts, they go about to wash away their own defilements, and make themselves clean; and they weary themselves in vain, till God shows them that it is in vain, and their help is not where they have sought it, but elsewhere.

But some persons continue wandering in such a kind of labyrinth ten times as long as others, before their own experience will convince them of their insufficiency; and so it appears not to be their own experience only, but the convincing influence of God's Spirit with their experience, that attains the effect: and God has of late abundantly shown that he does not need to wait to have men convinced by long and often repeated fruitless trials; for in multitudes of instances he has made a shorter work of it: he has so awakened and convinced persons' consciences, and made them so sensible of their exceedingly great vileness, and given them such a sense of his wrath against sin, as has quickly overcome all their vain self-confidence, and borne them down into the dust before a holy and righteous God.

There have been some who have not had great terrors, but have had a very quick work. Some of those that have not had so deep a conviction of these things before their conversion, have, it may be, much more of it afterwards. God has appeared far from limiting himself to any certain method

in his proceedings with sinners under legal convictions. In some instances it seems easy for our reasoning powers to discern the methods of Divine Wisdom, in his dealings with the soul under awakenings: in others his footsteps cannot be traced, and his ways are past finding out: and some that are less distinctly wrought upon in what is preparatory to grace, appear no less eminent in gracious experiences afterwards.

There is in nothing a greater difference, in different persons, than with respect to the time of their being under trouble; some but a few days, and others for months or years. There were many in this town, that had been, before this effusion of God's Spirit upon us, for years, and some for many years, concerned about their salvation; though probably they were not thoroughly awakened, yet they were concerned to such a degree as to be very uneasy, so as to live an uncomfortable, disquieted life, and so as to continue in a way of taking considerable pains about their salvation, but had never obtained any comfortable evidence of a good state, who now, in this extraordinary time, have received light; but many of them were some of the last. They first saw multitudes of others rejoicing, and with songs of deliverance in their mouths, who seemed wholly careless and at ease, and in pursuit of vanity, while they had been bowed down with solicitude about their souls: yea, some had lived licentiously, and so continued till a little before they were converted, and grew up to a holy rejoicing in the infinite blessings God had bestowed upon them.

And whatever minister has the like occasion to deal with souls, in a flock under such circumstances as this was in the last year, I cannot but think he will soon find himself under a necessity, greatly to insist upon it with them, that God is under no manner of obligation to show mercy to any natural man, whose heart is not turned to God: and that a man can challenge nothing, either in absolute justice, or by free promise, from any thing he does before he has believed on Jesus

Christ, or has true repentance begun in him. It appears to me, that if I had taught those that came to me under trouble, any other doctrine, I should have taken a most direct course utterly to have undone them. I should have directly crossed what was plainly the drift of the Spirit of God in his influence upon them; for if they had believed what I said, it would either have promoted self-flattery and carelessness, and so put an end to their awakenings, or cherished and established their contention and strife with God, concerning his dealings with them and others, and blocked up their way to that humiliation, before the Sovereign Disposer of life and death, whereby God is wont to prepare them for his consolations. And yet those that have been under awakenings, have oftentimes plainly stood in need of being encouraged, by being told of the infinite and all-sufficient mercy of God in Christ; and that it is God's manner to succeed diligence, and to bless his own means, that so awakenings and encouragements, fear and hope, may be duly mixed, and proportioned to preserve their minds in a just medium between the two extremes of self-flattery and despondence, both which tend to slackness, and negligence, and in the end, to security. I think I have found that no discourses have been more remarkably blessed, than those in which the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty with regard to the salvation of sinners, and his just liberty with regard to his answering the prayers or succeeding the pains of natural men, continuing such, have been insisted on. I never found so much immediate saving fruit, in any measure, of any discourses I have offered to my congregation, as some from those words, Rom. iii. 19.; "That every mouth may be stopped;" endeavoring to show from thence that it would be just with God forever to reject and cast off mere natural men.

In those in whom awakenings seem to have a saving issue, commonly the first thing that appears after their legal troubles, is a conviction of the justice of God in their con-

demnation, in a sense of their own exceeding sinfulness, and the vileness of all their performances. In giving account of this, they expressed themselves very variously ; some, that God was sovereign, and might receive others and reject them : some, that they were convinced that God might justly bestow mercy on every person in the town, and on every person in the world, and damn themselves to all eternity ; some, that they see that God may justly have no regard to all the pains they have taken, and all the prayers they have made ; some, that they see that if they should seek and take the utmost pains, all their lives, God might justly cast them into hell at last, because all their labors, prayers, and tears, cannot make an atonement for the least sin, nor merit any blessing at the hands of God ; some have declared themselves to be in the hands of God, that he can and may dispose of them just as he pleases ; some, that God may glorify himself in their damnation, and they wonder that God has suffered them to live so long, and has not cast them into hell long ago.

Some are brought to this conviction by a great sense of their sinfulness in general, that they are such vile, wicked creatures, in heart and life : others have the sins of their lives in an extraordinary manner set before them, multitudes of them coming just then fresh to their memories, and being set before them with their aggravations ; some have their minds especially fixed on some particular wicked practice they have indulged ; some are especially convinced by a sight of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts ; some, from a view they have of the horridness of some particular exercises of corruption which they have had in the time of their awakenings, whereby the enmity of the heart against God has been manifested ; some are convinced especially by a sense of the sin of unbelief, the opposition of their hearts to the way of salvation by Christ, and their obstinacy in rejecting him and his grace.

There is a great deal of difference as to persons' distinctness here; some, that have not so clear a sight of God's justice in their condemnation, yet mention things that plainly imply it. They find a disposition to acknowledge God to be just and righteous in his threatenings, and that they are deserving of nothing. And many times, though they had not so particular a sight of it at the beginning, they have very clear discoveries of it soon afterwards, with great humblings in the dust before God.

Commonly persons' minds immediately before this discovery of God's justice, are exceedingly restless, and in a kind of struggle and tumult, and sometimes in mere anguish: but generally as soon as they have this conviction, it immediately brings their minds to a calm, and a before unexpected quietness and composure; and most frequently, though not always, then the pressing weight upon their spirits is taken away, and a general hope arises that some time or other God will be gracious, even before any distinct and particular discoveries of mercy; and often they then come to a conclusion within themselves, that they will lie at God's feet, and wait his time; and they rest in that, not being sensible that the Spirit of God has now brought them to a frame whereby they are prepared for mercy; for it is remarkable that persons when they first have this sense of the justice of God, rarely in the time of it think any thing of its being that humiliation that they have often heard insisted on, and that others' experience.

In many persons, the first conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation, which they take particulor notice of, and probably the first distinct conviction of it that they have is of such a nature as seems to be above any thing merely legal: though it be after legal humblings, and much of the sense of their own helplessness, and of the insufficiency of their own duties; yet it does not appear to be forced by mere legal terrors and convictions; but rather from a high exercise of grace, in saving repentance and evangelical humiliation:

for there is in it a sort of complacency of soul in the attribute of God's justice, as displayed in his threatenings of eternal damnation to sinners. Sometimes at the discovery of it, they can scarcely forbear crying out, *'tis just! 'tis just!* Some express themselves, that they see the glory of God would shine bright in their own condemnation; and they are ready to think that if they are damned, they could take part with God against themselves, and would glorify his justice therein. And when it is thus, they commonly have some evident sense of free and all-sufficient grace, though they give no distinct account of it; but it is manifest by that great degree of hope and encouragement that they then conceive, though they were never so sensible of their own vileness and ill-deservings, as they were at that time.

Some, when in such circumstances, have felt that sense of the excellency of God's justice, appearing in the vindictive exercises of it against such sinfulness as theirs was, and have had such a submission of mind in their idea of this attribute, and of those exercises of it, together with an exceeding loathing of their own unworthiness, and a kind of indignation against themselves, that they have sometimes almost called it a willingness to be damned; though it must be owned they had not clear and distinct ideas of damnation, nor does any word in the Bible require such self-denial as this. But the truth is, as some have clearly expressed it, that salvation has appeared too good for them, that they were worthy of nothing but condemnation, and they could not tell how to think of salvation's being bestowed upon them, fearing it was inconsistent with the glory of God's majesty, that they had so much contemned and affronted.

That calm of spirit that some persons have found after their legal distresses, continues some time before any special and delightful manifestation is made to the soul, of the grace of God, as revealed in the gospel; but very often some comfortable and sweet view of a merciful God, of a sufficient Redeemer, or of some great and joyful things of the gospel, im-

mediately follows, or in a very little time: and in some, the first sight of their just desert of hell, and God's sovereignty with respect to their salvation, and a discovery of all-sufficient grace, are so near that they seem to go as it were together.

These gracious discoveries that are given, whence the first special comforts are derived, are in many respects very various; more frequently Christ is distinctly made the object of the mind, in his all-sufficiency and willingness to save sinners: but some have their thoughts more especially fixed on God, in some of his sweet and glorious attributes manifested in the gospel, and shining forth in the face of Christ. Some view the all-sufficiency of the mercy and grace of God; some, chiefly the infinite power of God, and his ability to save them, and to do all things for them; and some look most at the truth and faithfulness of God: in some, the truth and certainty of the gospel in general is the first joyful discovery they have; in others, the certain truth of some particular promises; in some, the grace and sincerity of God in his invitations, very commonly in some particular invitation in the mind, and it now appears real to them that God does indeed invite them. Some are struck with the glory and wonderfulness of the dying love of Christ; and some with the sufficiency and preciousness of his blood, as offered to make an atonement for sin; and others with the value and glory of his obedience and righteousness. In some, the excellency and loveliness of Christ, chiefly engages their thoughts; in some, his divinity, that he is indeed the Son of the living God; and in others, the excellency of the way of salvation by Christ, and the suitableness of it to their necessities.

Some have an apprehension of these things so given, that it seems more natural to them to express it by sight or discovery; others think what they experience better expressed by the realizing conviction, or a lively or feeling sense of heart; meaning, as I suppose, no other difference but what is merely circumstantial or gradual.

There is often in the mind some particular text of scripture, holding forth some evangelical ground of consolation; sometimes a multitude of texts, gracious invitations, and promises, flowing in one after another, filling the soul more and more with comfort and satisfaction; and comfort is given to some while reading some portion of scripture; but in some it is attended with no particular scripture at all, either in reading or meditation. In some, many divine things seem to be discovered to the soul as it were at once; others have their minds especially fixing on some one thing at first, and afterwards a sense is given of others; in some with a swifter, and others a slower succession, and sometimes with interruptions of much darkness.

The way that grace seems sometimes first to appear, after legal humiliation, is in earnest longings of soul after God and Christ, to know God, to love him, to be humbled before him, to have communion with Christ in his benefits, which longings, as they express them, seem evidently to be of such a nature as can arise from nothing but a sense of the superlative excellency of divine things, with a spiritual taste and relish of them, and an esteem of them as their highest happiness and best portion. Such longings as I speak of are commonly attended with firm resolutions to pursue this good forever, together with a hoping, waiting disposition. When persons have begun in such frames, commonly other experiences and discoveries have soon followed, which have yet more clearly manifested a change of heart.

It must needs be confessed that Christ is not always distinctly and explicitly thought of in the first sensible act of grace (though most commonly he is); but sometimes he is the object of the mind only implicitly. Thus sometimes when persons have seemed evidently to be stript of all their own righteousness, and to have stood self-condemned as guilty of death, they have been comforted with a joyful and satisfying view that the mercy and grace of God is sufficient for them; that their sins, though never so great, shall be no

hinderance to their being accepted; that there is mercy enough in God for the whole world, and the like, when they give no account of any particular or distinct thought of Christ; but yet when the account they give is duly weighed, and they are interrogated about it, it appears that the revelation of the mercy of God in the gospel is the ground of this their encouragement and hope; and that it is indeed the mercy of God through Christ that is discovered to them, and that it is depended on in him, and not in any wise moved by any thing in them.

So sometimes disconsolate souls among us have been revived and brought to rest in God, by a sweet sense given of his grace and faithfulness, in some special invitation or promise, in which is no particular mention of Christ, nor is it accompanied with any distinct thought of him in their minds; but yet it is not received as out of Christ, but as one of the invitations or promises made of God to poor sinners through his Son Jesus, as it is indeed; and such persons have afterwards had clear and distinct discoveries of Christ, accompanied with lively and special actings of faith and love towards him.

It has more frequently been so among us that when persons have first had the gospel ground of relief for lost sinners discovered to them, and have been entertaining their minds with the sweet prospect, they have thought nothing at that time of their being converted; to see that there is such an all-sufficiency in God, and such plentiful provision made in Christ, after they have been borne down and sunk with a sense of their guilt and fears of wrath, exceedingly refreshes them; the view is joyful to them, as it is in its own nature glorious, and gives them quite new and more delighful ideas of God and Christ, and greatly encourages them to seek conversion, and begets in them a strong resolution to give up themselves, and devote their whole lives to God and his Son, and patiently to wait till God shall see fit to make all effec-

tual; and very often they entertain a strong persuasion that he will in his own time do it for them.

There is wrought in them a holy repose of soul in God through Christ, and a secret disposition to fear and love him, and to hope for blessings from him in this way; and yet they have no imagination that they are now converted; it does not so much as come into their minds: and very often the reason is, that they do not see that they do accept of this sufficiency of salvation that they behold in Christ, having entertained a wrong notion of acceptance; not being sensible that the obedient and joyful entertainment which their hearts give to this discovery of grace, is a real acceptance of it. They know not that the sweet complacence they feel in the mercy and complete salvation of God, as it includes pardon and sanctification, and is held forth to them only through Christ, is a true receiving of this mercy, or a plain evidence of their receiving it. They expected I know not what kind of act of soul, and perhaps they had no distinct idea of it themselves.

And indeed it appears very plainly in some of them that before their own conversion they had very imperfect ideas what conversion was. It is all new and strange, and what there was no clear conception of before. It is most evident, as they themselves acknowledge, that the expressions that were used to describe conversion, and the graces of God's Spirit, such as a spiritual sight of Christ, faith in Christ, poverty of spirit, trust in God, resignedness to God, &c., were expressions that did not convey those special and distinct ideas to their minds which they were intended to signify, in some respects, no more than the names of colors are to convey the ideas to one that is blind from his birth.

This town is a place where there has always been a great deal of talk of conversion and spiritual experiences; and therefore people in general had before formed a notion in their own minds what these things were; but when they come to be the subjects of them themselves, they found them-

selves much confounded in their notions, and overthrown in many of their former conceits. And it has been very observable, that persons of the greatest understanding, and that had studied most about things of this nature, have been more confounded than others. Some such persons that have lately been converted, declared that all their former wisdom is brought to nought, and they appear to have been mere babes, who knew nothing. It has appeared that none have stood more in need of enlightening and instruction, even of their fellow-Christians, concerning their own circumstances and difficulties, than they: and it has seemed to have been with delight, that they have seen themselves thus brought down and become nothing, that free grace and divine power may be exalted in them.

It was very wonderful to see after what manner persons' affections were sometimes moved and wrought upon, when God did, as it were, suddenly open their eyes, and let into their minds a sense of the greatness of his grace, and the fullness of Christ, and his readiness to save; who before were broken with apprehensions of divine wrath, and sunk into an abyss under a sense of guilt, which they were ready to think was beyond the mercy of God; their joyful surprise has caused their hearts as it were to leap, so that they have been ready to break forth into laughter, tears often at the same time issuing like a flood, and intermingling a loud weeping: and sometimes they have not been able to forbear crying out with a loud voice, expressing their great admiration. In some, even the view of the glory of God's sovereignty in the exercises of his grace has surprised the soul with such sweetness as to produce the same effects. I remember an instance of one, who, reading something concerning God's sovereign way of saving sinners, as being self-moved, and having no regard to men's own righteousness as the motive of his grace, but as magnifying himself and abasing man, or to that purpose, felt such a sudden rapture of joy and delight in the consideration of it: and yet

he then suspected himself to be in a Christless condition, and had been long in great distress for fear that God would not have mercy on him.

Many continue a long time in a course of gracious exercises and experiences, and do not think themselves to be converted, but conclude themselves to be otherwise; and none knows how long they would continue so, were they not helped by particular instruction. There are undoubted instances of some that have lived in this way for many years together; and continuing in these circumstances of being converted and not believing it, has had various consequences with various persons, and with the same persons at various times; some continue in great encouragement and hope, that they shall obtain mercy in a steadfast resolution to persevere in seeking it, and in a humble waiting for it at God's foot; but very often, when the lively sense of the sufficiency of Christ, and the riches of divine grace begins to vanish upon a withdrawment of the influence of the Spirit of God, they return to greater distress than ever; for they have now a far greater sense of the misery of a natural condition than before, being in a new manner sensible of the reality of eternal things, and the greatness of God, and his excellency, and how dreadful it is to be separated from him, and to be subject to his wrath; so that they are sometimes swallowed up with darkness and amazement. Satan has a vast advantage in such cases to ply them with various temptations, which he is not wont to neglect. In such a case, persons do very much need a guide to lead them to an understanding of what we are taught in the word of God of the nature of grace, and to help them to apply it to themselves.

I have been much blamed and censured by many, that I should make it my practice, when I have been satisfied concerning persons' good state, to signify it to them: which thing has been greatly misrepresented abroad, as innumerable other things concerning us, to prejudice the country against the whole affair. But let it be noted that what I have underta-

ken to judge of, has rather been qualifications, and declared experiences, than persons: not but that I have thought it my duty as a pastor to assist and instruct persons in applying scripture rules and characters to their own case (in doing of which, I think many greatly need a guide); and have, where I thought the case plain, used freedom in signifying my hope of them, to others; but have been far from doing this concerning all that I have had some hopes of; and I believe have used much more caution than many have supposed. Yet I should account it a great calamity to be deprived of the comfort of rejoicing with those of my flock, that have been in great distress, whose circumstances I have been acquainted with, when there seems to be good evidence that those that were dead are alive, and those that were lost are found. I am sensible the practice would have been safer in the hands of one of a riper judgment, and greater experience; but yet there has seemed to be an absolute necessity of it on the forementioned accounts; and it has been found to be that which God has most remarkably owned and blest among us, both to the persons themselves and others.

Grace in many persons, through this ignorance of their state, and their looking on themselves still as the objects of God's displeasure, has been like the trees in winter, or like seed in the spring suppressed under a hard clod of earth; and many in such cases have labored to their utmost to divert their minds from the pleasing and joyful views they have had, and to suppress those consolations and gracious affections that arose thereupon. And when it has once come into their minds to inquire whether or no this was not true grace, they have been much afraid lest they should be deceived with common illuminations and flashes of affection, and eternally undone with a false hope. But when they have been better instructed, and so brought to allow of hope, this has awakened the gracious disposition of their hearts into life and vigor, as the warm beams of the sun in the spring have

quickened the seeds and productions of the earth: grace, being now at liberty, and cherished with hope, has soon flowed out to their abundant satisfaction and increase.

There is no one thing that I know of that God has made such a means of promoting his work among us as the news of others' conversion; in the awakening of sinners, and engaging them earnestly to seek the same blessing, and in the quickening of saints. Though I have thought that a minister's declaring his judgment about particular persons' experiences might from these things be justified, yet I am often signifying to my people how unable one man is to know another's heart, and how unsafe it is depending merely on the judgment of ministers or others, and have abundantly insisted on it with them, that a manifestation of sincerity in fruits brought forth is better than any manifestation they can make of it in words alone, can be; and that without this, all pretenses to spiritual experiences are vain; as all my congregation can witness. And the people in general, in this late extraordinary time, have manifested a very great dread of being deceived, being exceedingly fearful lest they should build wrong, and some of them backward to receive hope, even to a great extreme.

Conversion is a great and glorious work of God's power, at once changing the heart, and infusing life into the dead soul; though that grace that is then implanted does more gradually display itself in some than in others. But as to fixing on the precise time when they put forth the very first act of grace, there is a great deal of difference in different persons; in some it seems to be very discernible when the very time of this was; but others are more at a loss. In this respect there are very many that do not know the time, (as has already been observed,) that when they have the first exercises of grace, do not know that it is the grace of conversion, and sometimes do not think it to be so till a long time after: and many, even when they come to entertain great hope that they are converted, if they remember what they

experience in the first exercises of grace, they are at a loss whether it was any thing more than a common illumination; or whether some other more clear and remarkable experience that they had afterwards was not the first that was of a saving nature. And the manner of God's work on the soul is (sometimes especially) very mysterious, and it is with the kingdom of God as to its manifestation in the heart of a convert, as is said, Mark iv. 26, 27, 28. "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring, and grow up he knoweth not how; for the earth bringeth forth of herself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

In some, converting light is like a glorious brightness suddenly shining in upon a person, and all around him: they are in a remarkable manner brought out of darkness into marvelous light. In many others it has been like the dawning of the day, when at first but a little light appears, and it may be is presently hid with a cloud; and then it appears again, and shines a little brighter, and gradually increases with intervening darkness, till at length, perhaps, it breaks forth more clearly from behind the clouds. And many are, doubtless, ready to date their conversion wrong, throwing by those lesser degrees of light that appeared at first dawning, and calling some more remarkable experience they had afterwards, their conversion, which often in great measure arises from a wrong understanding of what they have always been taught, that conversion is a great change, wherein "old things are done away, and all things become new," or at least from a false arguing from that doctrine.

Persons commonly at first conversion, and afterwards, have had many texts of scripture brought to their minds, that are exceeding suitable to their circumstances, which often come with great power, and as the word of God or Christ indeed; and many have a multitude of sweet invitations, promises, doxologies, flowing in one after another,

bringing great light and comfort with them, filling the soul brimfull, enlarging the heart, and opening the mouth in religion. And it seems to me necessary to suppose that there is an immediate influence of the Spirit of God oftentimes in bringing texts of scripture to the mind ; not that I suppose it is done in a way of immediate revelation, without any manner of use of the memory, but yet there seems plainly to be an immediate and extraordinary influence in leading their thoughts to such and such passages of scripture, and exciting them in the memory. Indeed, in some God seems to bring texts of scripture to their minds no otherwise than by leading them into such frames and meditations as harmonize with those scriptures ; but in many persons there seems to be something more than this. Those that, while under legal convictions, have had the greatest terrors, have not always obtained the greatest light and comfort ; nor have they always light most suddenly communicated ; but yet, I think, the time of conversion has generally been most sensible in such persons. Oftentimes the first sensible change after the extremity of terrors, is a calmness, and then the light gradually comes in ; small glimpses at first, after their midnight darkness, and a word or two of comfort, as it were, softly spoken to them. They have a little taste of the sweetness of divine grace, and the love of a Savior, when terror and distress of conscience begins to be turned into a humble, meek sense of their own unworthiness before God ; and there is felt inwardly, perhaps, some disposition to praise God ; and after a little while the light comes in more clearly and powerfully. But yet, I think, more frequently, great terrors have been followed with more sudden and great light and comfort ; when the sinner seems to be as it were subdued and brought to a calm, from a kind of tumult of mind, then God lets in an extraordinary sense of his great mercy through a Redeemer.

The converting influences of God's Spirit very commonly bring an extraordinary conviction of the reality and certainty

of the great things of religion; (though in some this is much greater, some time after conversion, than at first;) they have that sight and taste of the divinity, or divine excellency, that there is in the things of the gospel, that is more to convince them than reading many volumes of arguments without it. It seems to me that in many instances among us, when the divine excellency and glory of the things of Christianity have been set before persons, and they have at the same time as it were seen, and tasted, and felt the divinity of them, they have been as far from doubting of the truth of them, as they are from doubting whether there be a sun, when their eyes are open upon it in the midst of a clear hemisphere, and the strong blaze of his light overcomes all objections against his being. And yet many of them, if we should ask them why they believed those things to be true, would not be able well to express or communicate a sufficient reason to satisfy the inquirer, and perhaps would make no other answer but that they see them to be true: but a person might soon be satisfied, by a particular conversation with them, that what they mean by such an answer is, that they have intuitively beheld, and immediately felt, most illustrious works, and powerful evidence of divinity in them.

Some are thus convinced of the truth of the gospel in general, and that the scriptures are the word of God: others have their minds more especially fixed on some particular great doctrine of the gospel, some particular truths that they are meditating on; or are in a special manner convinced of the divinity of the things they are reading of, in some portion of the scripture. Some have such convictions in a much more remarkable manner than others; and there are some that never had such a special sense of the certainty of divine things impressed upon them with such inward evidence and strength, who have yet very clear exercises of grace, such as love to God, repentance, and holiness. And if they be more particularly examined, they appear plainly

to have an inward, firm persuasion of the reality of divine things, such as they did not use to have before their conversion. And those that have the most clear discoveries of divine truth, in the manner that has been spoken of, cannot have this always in view. When the sense and relish of the divine excellency of these things fades, on a withdrawment of the Spirit of God, they have not the medium of the conviction of their truth at command: in a dull frame, they cannot recall the idea and inward sense they had, perfectly to mind; things appear very dim to what they did before; and though there still remains an habitual strong persuasion, yet not so as to exclude temptations to unbelief, and all possibility of doubting, as before; but then at particular times, by God's help, the same sense of things revives again, like fire that lay hid in ashes.

I suppose the grounds of such a conviction of the truth of divine things to be just and rational, but yet in some God makes use of their own reason much more sensibly than in others. Oftentimes persons have (so far as could be judged) received the first saving conviction from reasoning which they have heard from the pulpit; and often in the course of reasoning which they are led into in their own meditations.

The arguments are the same that they have heard hundreds of times; but the force of the arguments, and their conviction by them, is altogether new; they come with a new and before unexperienced power: before, they heard it was so, and they allowed it to be so; but now they see it to be so indeed. Things now look exceedingly plain to them, and they wonder that they did not see them before.

They are so greatly taken with their new discovery, and things appear so plain and rational to them, that they are often at first ready to think they can convince others, and are apt to engage in talk with every one they meet with, almost to this end: and when they are disappointed, are

ready to wonder that their reasonings seem to make no more impression.

Many fall under such a mistake as to be ready to doubt of their good state, because there was so much use made of their own reason in the convictions they have received: they are afraid that they have no illumination above the natural force of their own faculties: and many make that an objection against the spirituality of their convictions, that it is so easy to see things as they now see them. They have often heard that conversion is a work of mighty power, manifesting to the soul what no man or angel can give such a conviction of; but it seems to them that the things that they see are so plain, and easy, and rational, that any body can see them; and if they are inquired of why they never saw so before, they say, it seems to them it was because they never thought of it. But very often these difficulties are soon removed by those of another nature; for when God withdraws, they find themselves as it were blind again; they for the present lose their realizing sense of those things that looked so plain to them, and by all that they can do they cannot recover it, till God renews the influences of his Spirit.

Persons after their conversion often speak of things of religion as seeming new to them; that preaching is a new thing; that it seems to them they never heard preaching before; that the Bible is a new book: they find there new chapters, new psalms, new histories, because they see them in a new light. Here was a remarkable instance of an aged woman that had spent most of her days under Mr. Stoddard's powerful ministry, who, reading in the New Testament concerning Christ's sufferings for sinners, seemed to be surprised and astonished at what she read, as at a thing that was real and very wonderful, but quite new to her, insomuch that at first, before she had time to turn her thoughts, she wondered within herself that she had never heard of it before; but then immediately recollected herself, and thought that she had often heard of it and read it, but never till now

saw it as a thing real; and then cast in her mind how wonderful this was, that the Son of God should undergo such things for sinners, and how she had spent her time in ungratefully sinning against so good a God, and such a Savior; though she was a person, as to what was visible, of a very blameless and inoffensive life. And she was so overcome by these considerations that her nature was ready to fail under them. Those that were about her, and knew not what was the matter, were surprised, and thought she was dying.

Many have spoken much of their hearts being drawn out in love to God and Christ; and their minds being wrapt up in delightful contemplation of the glory and wonderful grace of God, and the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ; and of their souls going forth in longing desires after God and Christ. Several of our young children have expressed much of this, and have manifested a willingness to leave father and mother, and all things in the world, to go to be with Christ. Some persons have had longing desires after Christ, which have risen to that degree as to take away their natural strength. Some have been so overcome with a sense of the dying love of Christ to such poor, wretched, and unworthy creatures, as to weaken the body. Several persons have had so great a sense of the glory of God and excellency of Christ, that nature and life have seemed almost to sink under it; and in all probability, if God had showed them a little more of himself, it would have dissolved their frame. I have seen some, and been in conversation with them in such frames, who have certainly been perfectly sober and very remote from any thing like enthusiastic wildness: and have talked, when able to speak, of the glory of God's perfections, and the wonderfulness of his grace in Christ, and their own unworthiness, in such a manner that cannot be perfectly expressed after them. Their sense of their exceeding littleness and vileness, and their disposition to abase themselves before God, has appeared to be great in

proportion to their light and joy. Such persons among us as have been distinguished with the most extraordinary discoveries of God, have commonly in nowise appeared with the assuming, and self-conceited, and self-sufficient airs of enthusiasts, but exceedingly the contrary; and are eminent for a spirit of meekness, modesty, self-diffidence, and low opinion of themselves. No persons seem to be so sensible of their need of instruction and so eager to receive it as some of them are. Those that have been thought to be converted among us have generally manifested a longing to lie low and in the dust before God: withal complaining of their not being able to lie low enough. They very often speak much of their sense of the excellency of the way of salvation by free and sovereign grace, through the righteousness of Christ alone; and how it is with delight that they renounce their own righteousness, and rejoice in having no account made of it. Many have expressed themselves to this purpose, that it would lessen the satisfaction they hope for in heaven to have it by their own righteousness, or in any other way than as bestowed by free grace, and for Christ's sake alone. They speak much of the inexpressibleness of what they experience, how their words fail, so that they can in nowise declare it: and particularly speak with exceeding admiration of the superlative excellency of that pleasure and delight of soul which they sometimes enjoy; how a little of it is sufficient to pay them for the pains and trouble they have gone through in seeking salvation, and how far it exceeds all earthly pleasures; and some express much of the sense which these spiritual views give them of the vanity of earthly enjoyments, how mean and worthless all these things appear to them.

Many, while their minds have been filled with spiritual delights, have as it were forgotten their food; their bodily appetite has failed, while their minds have been entertained with meat to eat that others know not of. The light and comfort which some of them enjoy, gives a new relish to

their common blessings, and causes all things about them to appear as it were beautiful, sweet, and pleasant to them. All things abroad, the sun, moon, and stars, the clouds and sky, the heavens and earth, appear as it were with a cast of divine glory and sweetness upon them. The sweetest joy that these good people among us express is not that which consists in a sense of the safety of their own state, and that now they are out of the danger of hell; frequently in times of their highest spiritual entertainment this seems to be as it were forgotten. The supreme attention of their minds is to the glorious excellencies of God and Christ which they have in view; not but there is very often a ravishing sense of God's love accompanying a sense of his excellency, and they rejoice in a conviction of the faithfulness of God's promises as they respect the future eternal enjoyment of God.

The joy that many of them speak of, as that to which none is to be paralleled, is that which they find when they are lowest in the dust, emptied most of themselves, as it were annihilating themselves before God, when they are nothing and God is all; thus seeing their own unworthiness, depending not at all on themselves but alone on Christ, and ascribing all glory to God: then their souls are most in the enjoyment of satisfying rest, excepting that, at such times, they apprehend themselves to be not sufficiently self-abased; for then above all times do they long to be lower. Some speak much of the exquisite sweetness and rest of soul that is to be found in the exercise of a spirit of resignation to God, and humble submission to his will. Many express earnest longings of soul to praise God; but at the same time complain that they cannot praise him as they would do, and they want to have others help them in praising him: they want to have every one praise God, and are ready to call upon every thing to praise him. They express a longing desire to live to God's glory, and to do something to his honor; but at the same time cry out of their insufficiency and barrenness; that they are poor, impotent creatures, can

do nothing of themselves, and are utterly insufficient to glorify their Creator and Redeemer.

While God was so remarkably present among us by his Spirit, there was no book so delighted in as the Bible; especially the book of Psalms, the prophecy of Isaiah, and the New Testament. Some, by reason of their esteem and love to God's word, have at some times been greatly and wonderfully delighted and affected at the sight of a Bible: and then also, there was no time so prized as the Lord's day, and no place in this world so desired as God's house. Our converts then appeared remarkably united in dear affection to one another, and many have expressed much of that spirit of love which they felt toward all mankind; and particularly to those that had been least friendly to them. Never, I believe, was so much done in confessing injuries, and making up differences, as the last year. Persons after their own conversion have commonly expressed an exceeding desire for the conversion of others: some have thought that they should be willing to die for the conversion of any soul, though of one of the meanest of their fellow-creatures, or of their worst enemies; and many have indeed been in great distress with desires and longings for it. This work of God had also a good effect to unite the people's affections much to their minister.

There are some persons that I have been acquainted with, but more especially two, that belong to other towns, that have been swallowed up exceedingly with a sense of the awful greatness and majesty of God; and both of them told me to this purpose, that if they in the time of it had had the least fear that they were not at peace with this so great a God, they should instantly have died.

It is to be remarked, that some persons by their conversion seem to be greatly helped as to their doctrinal notions of religion; it was particularly remarkable in one, who having been taken captive in his childhood, was trained up in Canada, in the Popish religion; and some years since re-

turned to this his native place, and was in a measure brought off from Popery: but seemed very awkward and dull of receiving any true and clear notion of the Protestant scheme, till he was converted; and then he was remarkably altered in this respect.

There is a vast difference, as has been observed, in the degree and also in the particular manner of persons' experiences both at and after conversion; some have grace working more sensibly in one way, others in another. Some speak more fully of a conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation; others more of their consenting to the way of salvation by Christ; some, more of the actings of love to God and Christ: some, more of acts of affiance, in a sweet and assured conviction of the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises: others more of their choosing and resting in God as their whole and everlasting portion, and of their ardent and longing desires after God, to have communion with him; others more of their abhorrence of themselves for their past sins, and earnest longings to live to God's glory for the time to come. Some have their mind fixed more on God; others on Christ, as I have observed before; but it seems evidently to be the same work, the same thing done, the same habitual change wrought in the heart; it all tends the same way, and to the same end; and it is plainly the same Spirit that breathes and acts in various persons. There is an endless variety in the particular manner and circumstances in which persons are wrought on; and an opportunity of seeing so much of such a work of God, will show that God is further from confining himself to certain steps and a particular method in his work on souls, than it may be some do imagine. I believe it has occasioned some good people among us, that were before too ready to make their own experiences a rule to others, to be less censorious and more extended in their charity. The work of God has been glorious in its variety: it has the more displayed the manifoldness and unsearchableness of

the wisdom of God, and wrought more charity among his people.

There is a great difference among those that are converted, as to the degree of hope and satisfaction that they have concerning their own state. Some have a high degree of satisfaction in this matter almost constantly; and yet it is rare that any do enjoy so full an assurance of their interest in Christ, that self-examination should seem needless to them; unless it be at particular seasons, while in the actual enjoyment of some great discovery, that God gives of his glory and rich grace in Christ, to the drawing forth of extraordinary acts of grace. But the greater part, as they sometimes fall into dead frames of spirit, are frequently exercised with scruples and fears concerning their condition.

They generally have an awful apprehension of the dreadfulness and fatal nature of a false hope; and there has been observable in most a great caution lest in giving an account of their experiences, they should say too much, and use too strong terms: and many, after they related their experiences, have been greatly afflicted with fears lest they have played the hypocrite, and used stronger terms than their case would fairly allow of; and yet could not find how they could correct themselves.

I think that the main ground of the doubts and fears which persons, after their conversion, have been exercised with about their own state, has been that they found so much corruption remaining in their hearts. At first their souls seem to be all alive, their hearts are fixed, and their affections flowing; they seem to live quite above the world, and meet with but little difficulty in religious exercises; and they are ready to think it will always be so: though they are truly abased under a sense of their vileness by reason of former acts of sin, yet they are not then sufficiently sensible what corruption still remains in their hearts; and therefore are surprised when they find that they begin to be in dull and dead frames, to be troubled with wandering thoughts in the time of public

and private worship, and to be utterly unable to keep themselves from them; also when they find themselves unaffected at seasons in which they think there is the greatest occasion to be affected; and when they feel worldly dispositions working in them, and it may be pride, and envy, and stirrings of revenge, or some ill spirit towards some person that has injured them, as well as other workings of indwelling sin: Their hearts are almost sunk with the disappointment; and they are ready presently to think that all which they have met with is nothing, and that they are mere hypocrites.

They are ready to argue that if God had indeed done such great things for them as they hoped, such ingratitude is inconsistent with it: they cry out of the hardness and wickedness of their hearts; and say there is so much corruption, that it seems to them impossible that there should be any goodness there; and many of them seem to be much more sensible how corrupt their hearts are than ever they were before they were converted; and some have been too ready to be impressed with fear, that instead of becoming better, they are grown much worse, and make it an argument against the goodness of their state. But in truth the case seems plainly to be, that now they feel the pain of their own wound; they have a watchful eye upon their hearts, that they did not use to have: they take more notice what sin is there, and sin is now more burthensome to them; they strive more against it, and feel more of the strength of it.

They are somewhat surprised that they should in this respect find themselves so different from the idea that they generally had entertained of godly persons; for though grace be indeed of a far more excellent nature than they imagined, yet those that are godly have much less of it, and much more remaining corruption than they thought. They never realized it, that persons were wont to meet with such difficulties after they were once converted. When they are thus exercised with doubts about their state, through the deadness of their frames of spirit, as long as these frames last,

they are commonly unable to satisfy themselves of the truth of their grace, by all their self-examination. When they hear of the signs of grace laid down for them to try themselves by, they are often so clouded, that they do not know how to apply them: they hardly know whether they have such and such things in them or not, and whether they have experienced them or not; that which was sweetest, and best, and most distinguishing in their experiences, they cannot recover a sense or idea of.

But on a return of the influences of the Spirit of God to revive the lively actings of grace, the light breaks through the cloud, and doubting and darkness soon vanish away.

Persons are often revived out of their dead and dark frames, by religious conversation: while they are talking of divine things, or ever they are aware, their souls are carried away into holy exercises with abundant pleasure. And oftentimes while they are relating their past experiences to their Christian brethren, they have a fresh sense of them revived, and the same experiences in a degree again renewed. Sometimes while persons are exercised in mind with several objections against the goodness of their state, they have scriptures, one after another, coming to their minds, to answer their scruples and unravel their difficulties, exceedingly apposite and proper to their circumstances; by which means their darkness is scattered; and often before the bestowment of any new remarkable comforts, especially after long continued deadness and ill frames, there are renewed humblings in a great sense of their own exceeding vileness and unworthiness, as before their first comforts were bestowed.

CHAPTER III.

Of remarkable impressions on the imagination.

MANY in the country have entertained a mean thought of this great work that there has been among us, from what they have heard of impressions that have been made on persons' imaginations. But there have been exceedingly great misrepresentations, and innumerable false reports concerning that matter. It is not, that I know of, the profession or opinion of any one person in the town, that any weight is to be laid on any thing seen with the bodily eyes: I know the contrary to be a received and established principle among us. I cannot say that there have been no instances of persons that have been ready to give too much heed to vain and useless imaginations; but they have been easily corrected; and I conclude it will not be wondered at that a congregation should need a guide in such cases to assist them in distinguishing wheat from chaff. But such impressions on the imagination as have been more usual, seem to me to be plainly no other than what is to be expected in human nature in such circumstances, and what is the natural result of the strong exercise of the mind, and impressions on the heart.

I do not suppose that they themselves imagined that they saw any thing with their bodily eyes; but only have had within them ideas strongly impressed, and as it were lively pictures in their minds; as for instance, some when in great terrors through fear of hell, have had lively ideas of a dreadful furnace. Some, when their hearts have been strongly impressed, and their affections greatly moved with a sense of the beauty and excellency of Christ, it has wrought on their imaginations so, that, together with a sense of his glorious spiritual perfections, there has arisen in the mind an idea of one of glorious majesty, and of a sweet and a gracious as-

pect. So some, when they have been greatly affected with Christ's death, have at the same time a lively idea of Christ hanging upon the cross, and of his blood running from his wounds; which things will not be wondered at by them that have observed how strong affections about temporal matters, will excite lively ideas and pictures of different things in the mind.

But yet the vigorous exercise of the mind, does doubtless more strongly impress it with imaginary ideas in some, than in others, which probably may arise from the difference of constitution, and seems evidently in some partly to arise from their peculiar circumstances. When persons have been exercised with extreme terrors, and there is a sudden change to light and joy, the imagination seems more susceptive of strong ideas, and the inferior powers, and even the frame of the body, is much more affected and wrought upon, than when the same persons have as great spiritual light and joy afterwards; of which it might perhaps be easy to give a reason. The aforementioned Rev. Messrs. Lord and Owen, who, I believe, are esteemed persons of learning and discretion, where they are best known, declared that they found these impressions on persons' imaginations quite different things from what fame had before represented to them, and that they were what none need to wonder at, or be stumbled by, or to that purpose.

There have indeed been some few instances of impressions on persons' imaginations, that have been something mysterious to me, and I have been at a loss about them; for though it has been exceedingly evident to me by many things that appeared in them, both then (when they related them) and afterwards, that they indeed had a great sense of the spiritual excellency of divine things accompanying them; yet I have not been able well to satisfy myself, whether their imaginary ideas have been more than could naturally arise from their spiritual sense of things. However, I have used the utmost caution in such cases: great care has been taken

both in public and in private, to teach persons the difference between what is spiritual and what is merely imaginary. I have often warned persons not to lay the stress of their hope on any ideas of any outward glory, or any external thing whatsoever, and have met with no opposition in such instructions. But it is not strange if some weaker persons, in giving an account of their experiences, have not so prudently distinguished between the spiritual and imaginary part; which some that have not been well affected to religion might take advantage of.

There has been much talk in many parts of the country, as though the people have symbolized with the Quakers, and the Quakers themselves have been moved with such reports; and came here, once and again, hoping to find good waters to fish in; but without the least success; and seem to be discouraged, and have left off coming. There have also been reports spread about the country, as though the first occasion of so remarkable a concern on peoples' minds here, was an apprehension that the world was near to an end, which was altogether a false report: Indeed after this stirring and concern became so general and extraordinary, as has been related, the minds of some were filled with speculation, what so great a dispensation of divine providence might forebode; and some reports were heard from abroad, as though certain divines and others thought the conflagration was nigh: but such reports were never generally looked upon as worthy of notice.

The work that has now been wrought on souls is evidently the same that was wrought in my venerable predecessor's days; as I have had abundant opportunity to know, having been in the ministry here two years with him, and so conversed with a considerable number that my grandfather thought to be savingly converted in that time; and having been particularly acquainted with experiences of many that were converted under his ministry before. And I know no one of them that in the least doubts of its being of the same

Spirit, and the same work. Persons have now no otherwise been subject to impressions on their imaginations than formerly: the work is of the same nature, and has not been attended with any extraordinary circumstances, excepting such as are analogous to the extraordinary degree of it before described. And God's people, that were formerly converted, have now partook of the same shower of divine blessing in the renewing, strengthening, edifying influences of the Spirit of God, that others have in his converting influences; and the work here has also been plainly the same with that which has been wrought in those of other places that have been mentioned as partaking of the same blessing. I have particularly conversed with persons about their experiences that belong to all parts of the county, and in various parts of Connecticut, where a religious concern has lately appeared; and have been informed of the experiences of many others by their own pastors.

It is easily perceived by the foregoing account that it is very much the practice of the people here to converse freely one with another of their spiritual experiences, which is a thing that many have been disgusted at. But however our people may have in some respects gone to extremes in it, yet it is doubtless a practice that the circumstances of this town, and neighboring towns, has naturally led them into. Whatsoever people are in such circumstances, where all have their minds engaged to such a degree, and in the same affair, that it is ever uppermost in their thoughts,—they will naturally make it the subject of conversation one with another when they get together, in which they will grow more and more free: restraints will soon vanish; and they will not conceal from one another what they meet with. And it has been a practice which in the general has been attended with many good effects, and what God has greatly blest among us: but it must be confessed there may have been some ill consequences of it; which yet are rather to be laid to the indiscreet management of it, than to the practice itself; and none can

wonder if among such a multitude some fail of exercising so much prudence in choosing the time, manner, and occasion of such discourse as is desirable.

CHAPTER IV.

This work further illustrated in particular instances.

But to give a clearer idea of the nature and manner of the operations of God's Spirit in this wonderful effusion of it, I would give an account of two particular instances. The first is an adult person, a young woman whose name was Abigail Hutchinson. I select her case especially because she is now dead, and so it may be more fit to speak freely of her than of living instances: though I am under far greater disadvantages on other accounts to give a full and clear narrative of her experiences than I might of some others; nor can any account be given but what has been retained in the memories of her near friends and some others of what they have heard her express in her life-time.

She was of a rational, understanding family: there could be nothing in her education that tended to enthusiasm, but rather to the contrary extreme. It is in no wise the temper of the family to be ostentatious of experiences, and it was far from being her temper. She was before her conversion, to the observation of her neighbors, of a sober and inoffensive conversation, and was a still, quiet, reserved person. She had long been infirm of body, but her infirmity had never been observed at all to incline her to be notional or fanciful, or to occasion any thing of religious melancholy. She was under awakenings scarcely a week before there seemed to be plain evidence of her being savingly converted.

She was first awakened in the winter season, on Monday, by something she heard her brother say of the necessity of

being in good earnest in seeking regenerating grace, together with the news of the conversion of the young woman before mentioned, whose conversion so generally affected most of the young people here. This news wrought much upon her, and stirred up a spirit of envy in her towards this young woman, whom she thought very unworthy of being distinguished from others by such a mercy; but withal it engaged her in a firm resolution to do her utmost to obtain the same blessing; and considering with herself what course she should take, she thought that she had not a sufficient knowledge of the principles of religion, to render her capable of conversion; whereupon she resolved thoroughly to search the scriptures; and accordingly immediately began at the beginning of the Bible, intending to read it through. She continued thus till Thursday; and then there was a sudden alteration, by a great increase of her concern, in an extraordinary sense of her own sinfulness, particularly the sinfulness of her nature, and wickedness of her heart, which came upon her (as she expressed it) as a flash of lightning, and struck her into an exceeding terror. Upon which she left off reading the Bible in course as she had begun, and turned to the New Testament, to see if she could not find some relief there for her distressed soul.

Her great terror, she said was, "that she had sinned against God." Her distress grew more and more for three days; until (as she said) she saw nothing but blackness of darkness before her, and her very flesh trembled for fear of God's wrath: she wondered and was astonished at herself, that she had been so concerned for her body, and had applied so often to physicians to heal that, and had neglected her soul. Her sinfulness appeared with a very awful aspect to her, especially in three things, viz. her original sin, and her sin in murmuring at God's providence, in the weakness and afflictions she had been under, and in want of duty to parents, though others had looked upon her to excel in dutifulness. On Saturday she was so earnestly engaged in reading the

Bible and other books, that she continued in it, searching for something to relieve her, till her eyes were so dim, that she could not know the letters. While she was thus engaged in reading, prayer, and other religious exercises, she thought of those words of Christ wherein he warns us not to be as the heathen, that think they shall be heard for their much speaking; which, she said, led her to see that she had trusted to her own prayers and religious performances, and now she was put to a nonplus, and knew not which way to turn herself, or where to seek relief.

While her mind was in this posture, her heart, she said, seemed to fly to the minister for refuge, hoping that he could give her some relief. She came the same day to her brother, with the countenance of a person in distress, expostulating with him, why he had not told her more of her sinfulness, and earnestly inquiring of him what she should do. She seemed that day to feel in herself an enmity against the Bible, which greatly affrighted her. Her sense of her own exceeding sinfulness continued increasing from Thursday till Monday; and she gave this account of it, that it had been an opinion, which till now she had entertained, that she was not guilty of Adam's sin, nor any way concerned in it, because she was not active in it; but that now she saw she was guilty of that sin, and all over defiled by it; and that the sin which she brought into the world with her, was alone sufficient to condemn her.

On the sabbath-day she was so ill that her friends thought it not best that she should go to public worship, of which she seemed very desirous: but when she went to bed on the sabbath-day night, she took up a resolution that she would the next morning go to the minister, hoping to find some relief there. As she awaked on Monday morning, a little before day, she wondered within herself at the easiness and calmness she felt in her mind, which was of that kind she never felt before; as she thought of this, such words as these were in her mind: "The words of the Lord are pure words, health

to the soul, and marrow to the bones :" and then these words came to her mind, "the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin ;" which were accompanied with a lively sense of the excellency of Christ, and his sufficiency to satisfy for the sins of the whole world. She then thought of that expression, "It is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun ;" which words then seemed to her to be very applicable to Jesus Christ. By these things her mind was led into such contemplations and views of Christ as filled her exceedingly full of joy. She told her brother in the morning that she had seen (that is, in realizing views by faith) Christ the last night, and that she had really thought that she had not knowledge enough to be converted ; but, says she, God can make it quite easy ! On Monday she felt all day a constant sweetness in her soul. She had a repetition of the same discoveries of Christ three mornings together, that she had on Monday morning, and much in the same manner at each time, waking a little before day ; but brighter and brighter every time.

At the last time on Wednesday morning, while in the enjoyment of a spiritual view of Christ's glory and fullness, her soul was filled with distress for Christless persons, to consider what a miserable condition they were in : and she felt in herself an inclination immediately to go forth to warn sinners ; and proposed it the next day to her brother to assist her in going from house to house ; but her brother restrained her, by telling her of the unsuitableness of such a method. She told one of her sisters that day, that she loved all mankind, but especially the people of God. Her sister asked her why she loved all mankind ? She replied, because God had made them. After this there happened to come into the shop where she was at work, three persons that were thought to have been lately converted ; her seeing them as they stepped in one after another into the door, so affected her, and so drew forth her love to them, that it overcame her, and she almost fainted : and when they began to talk of the things

of religion, it was more than she could bear; they were obliged to cease on that account. It was a very frequent thing with her to be overcome with a flow of affection to them that she thought godly, in conversation with them, and sometimes only at the sight of them.

She had many extraordinary discoveries of the glory of God and Christ; sometimes in some particular attributes, and sometimes in many. She gave an account that once, as those four words passed through her mind, *Wisdom*, *Justice*, *Goodness*, and *Truth*, her soul was filled with a sense of the glory of each of these divine attributes, but especially the last: *Truth*, said she, sunk the deepest! And therefore, as these words passed, this was repeated, *Truth*, *Truth!* Her mind was so swallowed up with a sense of the glory of God's truth and other perfections, that she said it seemed as though her life was going, and that she saw it was easy with God to take away her life by discoveries of himself. Soon after this, she went to a private religious meeting, and her mind was full of a sense and view of the glory of God all the time; and when the exercise was ended, some asked her concerning what she had experienced; and she began to give them an account; but as she was relating it, it revived such a sense of the same things, that her strength failed, and they were obliged to take her and lay her upon the bed. Afterwards she was greatly affected, and rejoiced with these words, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

She had several days together a sweet sense of the excellency and loveliness of Christ in his meekness, which disposed her continually to be repeating over these words, which were sweet to her, *Meek and lowly in heart*, *Meek and lowly in heart*. She once expressed herself to one of her sisters to this purpose, that she had continued whole days and whole nights in a constant ravishing view of the glory of God and Christ, having enjoyed as much as her life could bear. Once, as her brother was speaking of the dying love

of Christ, she told him that she had such a sense of it, that the mere mentioning of it was ready to overcome her.

Once, when she came to me, she told how that at such and such a time she thought she saw as much of God, and had as much joy and pleasure as was possible in this life, and that yet afterwards God discovered himself yet far more abundantly, and she saw the same things that she had seen before, yet more clearly, and in another and far more excellent and delightful manner, and was filled with a more exceeding sweetness; she likewise gave me such an account of the sense she once had, from day to day, of the glory of Christ, and of God, in his various attributes, that it seemed to me she dwelt for days together in a kind of beatific vision of God; and seemed to have, as I thought, as immediate an intercourse with him, as a child with a father: and at the same time she appeared most remote from any high thought of herself, and of her own sufficiency, but was like a little child, and expressed great desire to be instructed, telling me that she longed very often to come to me for instruction, and wanted to live at my house, that I might tell her her duty.

She often expressed a sense of the glory of God appearing in the trees, and growth of the fields, and other works of God's hands. She told her sister that lived near the heart of the town, that she once thought it a pleasant thing to live in the middle of the town; but now, says she, I think it much more pleasant to sit and see the wind blowing the trees, and to behold what God has made. She had sometimes the powerful breathings of the Spirit of God on her soul, while reading the scripture, and would express a sense that she had of the certain truth and divinity thereof. She sometimes would appear with a pleasant smile on her countenance; and once when her sister took notice of it, and asked why she smiled, she replied, I am brimfull of a sweet feeling within! She often used to express how good and sweet it was to lie low before God, and the lower, said she,

the better! and that it was pleasant to think of lying in the dust all the days of her life, mourning for sin. She was wont to manifest a great sense of her own meanness and dependence. She often expressed an exceeding compassion and pitiful love which she found in her heart towards persons in a Christless condition, which was sometimes so strong, that as she was passing by such in the streets, or those that she feared were such, she would be overcome by the sight of them. She once said, that she longed to have the whole world saved; she wanted, as it were, to pull them all to her; she could not bear to have one lost.

She had great longings to die, that she might be with Christ; which increased until she thought she did not know how to be patient to wait till God's time should come. But once when she felt those longings, she thought with herself, if I long to die, why do I go to physicians? Whence she concluded that her longings for death were not well regulated. After this she often put it to herself which she should choose, whether to live or to die, to be sick or to be well? and she found she could not tell, till at last she found herself disposed to say these words: I am quite willing to live, and quite willing to die; quite willing to be sick, and quite willing to be well; and quite willing for any thing that God will bring upon me! And then, said she, I felt myself perfectly easy, in a full submission to the will of God. She then lamented much that she had been so eager in her longings for death, as it argued want of such a resignation to God as ought to be. She seemed henceforward to continue in this resigned frame till death.

After this her illness increased upon her; and once, after she had before spent the greater part of the night in extreme pain, she waked out of a little sleep with these words in her heart and mouth: I am willing to suffer for Christ's sake; I am willing to spend and to be spent for Christ's sake; I am willing to spend my life, even my very life, for Christ's sake! And though she had an extraordinary resignation

with respect to life or death, yet the thoughts of dying were exceedingly sweet to her. At a time when her brother was reading in Job, concerning worms feeding on the dead body, she appeared with a pleasant smile; and being inquired of about it, she said it was sweet to her to think of her being in such circumstances. At another time, when her brother mentioned to her the danger there seemed to be that the illness she then labored under might be an occasion of her death, it filled her with joy that almost overcame her. At another time, when she met a company following a corpse to the grave, she said it was sweet to her to think that they would in a little time follow her in like manner.

Her illness, in the latter part of it, was seated much in her throat; and swelling inward, filled up the pipe so that she could swallow nothing but what was perfectly liquid, and but very little of that, and with great and long strugglings and stranglings; that which she took in flying out at her nostril, till she at last could swallow nothing at all. She had a raging appetite to food, so that she told her sister, when talking with her about her circumstances, that the worst bit that she threw to her swine, would be sweet to her: but yet when she saw that she could not swallow it, she seemed to be as perfectly contented without it, as if she had no appetite for it. Others were greatly moved to see what she underwent, and were filled with admiration at her unexampled patience. At a time when she was striving in vain to get down a little food, something liquid, and was very much spent with it, she looked up on her sister with a smile, saying, "O sister, this is for my good!" At another time, when her sister was speaking of what she underwent, she told her that she lived a heaven upon earth for all that. She used sometimes to say to her sister, under her extreme sufferings, "It is good to be so!" Her sister once asked her why she said so? "Why," said she, "because God would have it so: it is best that things should be as God would have them: it looks best to me." After her confinement, as

they were leading her from the bed to the door, she seemed overcome by the sight of things abroad, as showing forth the glory of the Being that had made them. As she lay on her death-bed, she would often say these words, "God is my friend!" And once looking up on her sister, with a smile, said, "O sister! how good it is! how sweet and comfortable it is to consider and think of heavenly things!" and used this argument to persuade her sister to be much in such meditations.

She expressed on her death-bed, an exceeding longing, both for persons in a natural state, that they might be converted, and for the godly, that they might see and know more of God. And when those that looked on themselves as in a Christless state, came to see her, she would be greatly moved with compassionate affection. One in particular, that seemed to be in great distress about the state of her soul, and had come to see her from time to time, she desired her sister to persuade not to come any more, because the sight of her so wrought on her compassion, that it overcame her nature. The same week that she died, when she was in distressing circumstances as to her body, some of the neighbors that came to see her asked if she was willing to die? She replied that she was quite willing either to live or die; she was willing to be in pain; she was willing to be so always as she was then, if that was the will of God. She willed what God willed. They asked her whether she was willing to die that night? She answered, Yes, if it be God's will. And seemed to speak all with that perfect composure of spirit, and with such a cheerful and pleasant countenance, that it filled them with admiration.

She was very weak a considerable time before she died, having pined away with famine and thirst, so that her flesh seemed to be dried upon her bones; and therefore could say but little, and manifested her mind very much by signs. She said she had matter enough to fill up all her time with talk, if she had but strength. A few days before her death,

some asked her whether she held her integrity still? Whether she was not afraid of death? She answered to this purpose, that she had not the least degree of fear of death. They asked her why she would be so confident? She answered, If I should say otherwise, I should speak contrary to what I know: there is, says she, indeed a dark entry that looks something dark, but on the other side there appears such a bright shining light, that I cannot be afraid! She said, not long before she died, that she used to be afraid how she should grapple with death; but, says she, God has showed me that he can make it easy in great pain. Several days before she died she could scarcely say any thing but just yes and no, to questions that were asked her, for she seemed to be dying for three days together; but seemed to continue in an admirably sweet composure of soul, without any interruption, to the last, and died as a person that went to sleep, without any struggling, about noon, on Friday, June 27th, 1735.

She had long been infirm, and often had been exercised with great pain; but she died chiefly of famine. It was, doubtless, partly owing to her bodily weakness, that her nature was so often overcome, and ready to sink with gracious affection; but yet the truth was, that she had more grace, and greater discoveries of God and Christ, than the present frail state did well consist with. She wanted to be where strong grace might have more liberty, and be without the clog of a weak body; there she longed to be, and there she doubtless now is. She was looked upon among us as a very eminent instance of Christian experience; but this is but a very broken and imperfect account I have given of her. Her eminency would much more appear, if her experiences were fully related, as she was wont to express and manifest them, while living. I once read this account to some of her pious neighbors, who were acquainted with her, who said, to this purpose, that the picture fell much short of the life; and particularly that it much failed of duly represent-

ing her humility, and that admirable lowliness of heart, that at all times appeared in her. But there are, blessed be God! many living instances of much the like nature, and in some things no less extraordinary.

But I now proceed to the other instance that I would give an account of, which is of the little child before mentioned. Her name is Phebe Bartlet, daughter of William Bartlet. I shall give the account as I took it from the mouths of her parents, whose veracity none that know them doubt of.

She was born in March, in the year 1731. About the latter end of April, or the beginning of May, 1735, she was greatly affected by the talk of her brother, who had been hopefully converted a little before, at about eleven years of age, and then seriously talked to her about the great things of religion. Her parents did not know of it at that time, and were not wont, in the counsels they gave to their children, particularly to direct themselves to her, by reason of her being so young, and as they supposed, not capable of understanding: but after her brother had talked to her, they observed her very earnestly to listen to the advice they gave to the other children; and she was observed very constantly to retire, several times in a day, as was concluded, for secret prayer, and grew more and more engaged in religion, and was more frequent in her closet, till at last she was wont to visit it five or six times in a day; and was so engaged in it, that nothing would at any time divert her from her stated closet exercises. Her mother often observed and watched her, when such things occurred as she thought most likely to divert her, either by putting it out of her thoughts, or otherwise engaging her inclinations, but never could observe her to fail. She mentioned some very remarkable instances.

She once of her own accord spoke of her unsuccessfulness, in that she could not find God, or to that purpose. But on Thursday, the last day of July, about the middle of the day, the child being in the closet, where it used to retire, its mother heard it speaking aloud, which was unusual, and never

had been observed before: and her voice seemed to be as of one exceedingly importunate and engaged; but her mother could distinctly hear only these words, (spoken in her childish manner, but seemed to be spoken with extraordinary earnestness and out of distress of soul,) *Pray, blessed Lord, give me salvation! I pray, beg, pardon all my sins!* When the child had done prayer, she came out of the closet, and sat down by her mother, and cried out aloud. Her mother very earnestly asked her several times, what the matter was, before he could make any answer; but she continued crying exceedingly, and writhing her body to and fro, like one in anguish of spirit. Her mother then asked her, whether she was afraid that God would not give her salvation. She answered, 'Yes, I am afraid I shall go to hell!' Her mother then endeavored to quiet her; and told her she would not have her cry; she must be a good girl, and pray every day, and she hoped God would give her salvation. But this did not quiet her at all; but she continued thus earnestly crying, and taking on for some time, till at length she suddenly ceased crying, and began to smile, and presently said with a smiling countenance, '*Mother, the kingdom of heaven is come to me!*' Her mother was surprised at the sudden alteration, and at the speech; and knew not what to make of it, but at first said nothing to her. The child presently spoke again, and said, 'There is another come to me, and there is another, there is three;' and being asked what she meant, she answered, 'One is, Thy will be done, and there is another, Enjoy him forever;' by which it seems, that when the child said, 'There is three come to me,' she meant three passages of her Catechism that came to her mind.

After the child had said this, she retired again into her closet; and her mother went over to her brother's, who was next neighbor; and when she came back, the child, being out of the closet, met her mother with this cheerful speech, 'I can find God now!' referring to what she had before

complained of, that she could not find God. Then the child spoke again and said, 'I love God!' Her mother asked her how well she loved God, whether she loved God better than her father and mother, she said, 'yes.' Then she asked her whether she loved God better than her little sister Rachel? She answered, 'Yes, better than any thing!' Then her eldest sister, referring to her saying she could find God now, asked her where she could find God. She answered, 'In heaven.' Why, said she, have you been in heaven? 'No,' said the child. By this it seems not to have been any imagination of any thing seen with bodily eyes, that she called God, when she said, I can find God now. Her mother asked her whether she was afraid of going to hell, and that had made her cry. She answered, "Yes, I was, but now I shan't." Her mother asked her whether she thought that God had given her salvation; she answered, "yes." Her mother asked her when. She answered, "to-day." She appeared all the afternoon exceedingly cheerful and joyful. One of her neighbors asked her how she felt herself? She answered, I feel better than I did." The neighbor asked her, what made her feel better? she answered, "God makes me." That evening as she lay in bed, she called one of her little cousins to her that was present in the room, as having something to say to him; and when he came, she told him, that "heaven was better than earth." The next day being Friday, her mother asking her her catechism, asked her what God made her for. She answered, "To serve him," and added, "every body should serve God, and get an interest in Christ."

The same day the elder children, when they came home from school, seemed much affected with the extraordinary change that seemed to be made in Phebe: and her sister Abigail standing by, her mother took occasion to counsel her now to improve her time to prepare for another world: on which Phebe burst out in tears, and cried out, "Poor Nabby!" Her mother told her she would not have her cry, she hoped that God would give Nabby salvation: but that did

not quiet her, but she continued earnestly crying for some time; and when she had in a measure ceased, her sister Eunice being by her, she burst out again, and cried, "Poor Eunice!" and cried exceedingly; and when she had almost done, she went into another room, and there looked up on her sister Naomi, and burst out again, crying, "Poor Amy!" Her mother was greatly affected at such a behavior in the child, and knew not what to say to her. One of the neighbors coming in a little after, asked her what she had cried for. She seemed at first backward to tell the reason: her mother told her she might tell that person, for he had given her an apple; upon which she said, she "cried because she was afraid they would go to hell."

At night a certain minister that was occasionally in the town, was at the house, and talked considerably with her of the things of religion; and after he was gone, she sat leaning on the table, with tears running out of her eyes: and being asked what made her cry, she said it was "thinking about God." The next day being Saturday, she seemed, great part of the day, to in a very affectionate frame, had four turns of crying, and seemed to endeavor to curb herself and hide her tears, and was very backward to talk of the occasion of it. On the sabbath-day she was asked whether she believed in God; she answered "yes:" and being told that Christ was the Son of God, she made ready answer, and said, "I know it."

From this time there has appeared a very remarkable, abiding change in the child: she has been very strict upon the sabbath, and seems to long for the sabbath-day before it comes, and will often in the week time be inquiring how long it is to the sabbath-day, and must have the days particularly counted over that are between, before she will be contented. And she seems to love God's house, and is very eager to go thither. Her mother once asked her why she had such a mind to go? whether it was not to see fine folks? She said, "No, it was to hear Mr. Edwards preach." When

she is in the place of worship, she is very far from spending her time there as children at her age usually do, but appears with an attention that is very extraordinary for such a child. She also appears very desirous at all opportunities to go to private religious meetings; and is very still and attentive at home in prayer-time, and has appeared affected in time of family prayer. She seems to delight much in hearing religious conversation. When I once was there with some others that were strangers, and talked to her something of religion, she seemed more than ordinarily attentive; and when we were gone, she looked out earnestly after us, and said, "I wish they would come again!" Her mother asked her why? says she, "I love to hear them talk."

She seems to have very much of the fear of God before her eyes, and an extraordinary dread of sin against him; of which her mother mentioned the following remarkable instance. Some time in August, the last year, she went with some larger children to get some plums, in a neighbor's lot, knowing nothing of any harm in what she did; but when she brought some of the plums into the house, her mother mildly reproved her, and told her that she must not get plums without leave, because it was sin: God had commanded her not to steal. The child seemed greatly surprised, and burst out in tears, and cried out, "I will not have these plums!" and turning to her sister Eunice, very earnestly said to her, "Why did you ask me to go to that plum-tree? I should not have gone if you had not asked me." The other children did not seem to be much affected or concerned; but there was no pacifying Phebe. Her mother told her she might go and ask leave, and then it would not be sin for her to eat them; and sent one of the children to that purpose; and when she returned, her mother told her that the owner had given leave, now she might eat them, and it would not be stealing. This stilled her a little while: but presently she broke out again into an exceeding fit of crying: her mother asked her what made her cry again?

Why she cried now, since they had asked leave? What it was that troubled her now? And asked her several times very earnestly, before she made any answer; but at last said, "it was because, *because it was sin.*" She continued a considerable time crying, and said she would not go again if Eunice asked her a hundred times; and she retained her aversion to that fruit for a considerable time, under the remembrance of her former sin.

She at sometimes appears greatly affected, and delighted with texts of scripture that come to her mind. Particularly, about the beginning of November, the last year, that text came to her mind, Rev. iii. 20. "Behold I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." She spoke of it to those of the family, with a great appearance of joy, a smiling countenance, and elevation of voice, and afterwards she went into another room, where her mother overheard her talking very earnestly to the children about it, and particularly heard her say to them, three or four times over, with an air of exceeding joy and admiration, "Why it is to *sup with God.*" At some time about the middle of winter, very late in the night, when all were in bed, her mother perceived that she was awake, and heard her, as though she was weeping. She called to her, and asked her what was the matter. She answered with a low voice, so that her mother could not hear what she said; but thinking that it might be occasioned by some spiritual affection, said no more to her; but perceived her to lie awake, and to continue in the same frame, for a considerable time. The next morning, she asked her whether she did not cry the last night: The child answered, "Yes, I did cry a little, for I was thinking about God and Christ, and they loved me." Her mother asked her whether to think of God and Christ's loving her made her cry: She answered, "Yes, it does sometimes."

She has often manifested a great concern for the good of others' souls: and has been wont many times affectionately

to counsel the other children. Once about the latter end of September, the last year, when she and some others of the children were in the room by themselves, husking Indian corn, the child, after a while, came out and sat by the fire. Her mother took notice that she appeared with a more than ordinarily serious and pensive countenance, but at last she broke silence, and said, "I have been talking to Nabby and Eunice." Her mother asked her what she had said to them. "Why," said she, "I told them that they must pray, and prepare to die, that they had but a little while to live in this world, and they must be always ready." When Nabby came out, her mother asked her whether she had said that to them. "Yes," said she, "she said that, and a great deal more." At other times, the child took her opportunities to talk to the other children about the great concern of their souls, sometimes, so as much to affect them, and set them into tears. She was once exceedingly importunate with her mother to go with her sister Naomi, to pray. Her mother endeavored to put her off; but she pulled her by the sleeve, and seemed as if she would by no means be denied. At last her mother told her that Amy must go and pray herself; "but," says the child, "she will not go;" and persisted earnestly to beg of her mother to go with her.

She has discovered an uncommon degree of a spirit of charity; particularly on the following occasion: A poor man that lives in the woods, had lately lost a cow, that the family much depended on, and being at the house, he was relating his misfortune, and telling of the straits and difficulties they were reduced to by it. She took much notice of it, and it wrought exceedingly on her compassion: and after she had attentively heard him a while, she went away to her father, who was in the shop, and entreated him to give that man a cow; and told him that the poor man had no cow; that the hunters or something else had killed his cow; and entreated him to give him one of theirs. Her father told her that they could not spare one. Then she entreated him to let him and

his family come and live at his house, and had much more talk of the same nature, whereby she manifested bowels of compassion to the poor.

She has manifested great love to her minister; particularly when I returned from my long journey for my health, the last fall. When she heard of it she appeared very joyful at the news, and told the children of it, with an elevated voice, as the most joyful tidings: repeating it over and over, "Mr. Edwards is come home! Mr. Edwards is come home!" She still continues very constant in secret prayer, so far as can be observed, (for she seems to have no desire that others should observe her when she retires, but seems to be a child of a reserved temper), and every night before she goes to bed, will say her catechism, and will by no means miss of it: she never forgot it but once, and then after she was in bed, thought of it, and cried out in tears, "I have not said my catechism!" and would not be quieted, till her mother asked her the catechism as she lay in bed. She sometimes appears to be in doubt about the condition of her soul, and when asked whether she thinks that she is prepared for death, speaks something doubtfully about it: at other times seems to have no doubt, but when asked, replies *yes*, without hesitation.

CHAPTER V.

Defects and decline of the work.

In the former part of this great work of God among us, till it got to its height, we seemed to be wonderfully smiled upon, and blest in all respects. Satan (as has been already observed) seemed to be unusually restrained. Persons that before had been involved in melancholy, seemed to be as it were waked up out of it; and those that had been entangled with extraordinary temptations, seemed wonderfully to be set

at liberty; and not only so, but it was the most remarkable time of health that ever I knew since I have been in the town. We ordinarily have several bills put up every sabbath, for persons that are sick; but now we had not so much as one for many sabbaths together. But after this it seemed to be otherwise: when this work of God appeared to be at its greatest height, a poor weak man that belongs to the town, being in great spiritual trouble, was hurried with violent temptations to cut his own throat, and made an attempt, but did not do it effectually. He after this continued a considerable time exceedingly overwhelmed with melancholy; but has now of a long time been very greatly delivered by the light of God's countenance lifted up upon him, and has expressed a great sense of his sin in so far yielding to temptation; and there are in him all hopeful evidences of his having been made a subject of saving mercy.

In the latter part of May it began to be very sensible that the Spirit of God was gradually withdrawing from us, and after this time Satan seemed to be more let loose, and raged in a dreadful manner. The first instance wherein it appeared, was a person's putting an end to his own life, by cutting his throat. He was a gentleman of more than common understanding, of strict morals, religious in his behavior, and a useful, honorable person in the town; but was of a family that are much prone to the disease of melancholy, and his mother was killed with it. He had, from the beginning of this extraordinary time, been exceedingly concerned about the state of his soul, and there were some things in his experience that appeared very hopefully; but he durst entertain no hope concerning his own good state. Towards the latter part of his time he grew much discouraged, and melancholy grew amain upon him, till he was wholly overpowered by it, and was in great measure past a capacity of receiving advice, or being reasoned with to any purpose: the devil took the advantage, and drove him into despairing thoughts. He was kept awake nights, medi-

tating terror; so that he had scarce any sleep at all, for a long time together. And it was observed at last, that he was scarcely well capable of managing his ordinary business, and was judged delirious by the coroner's inquest. The news of this extraordinarily affected the minds of the people here, and struck them as it were with astonishment. After this, multitudes in this and other towns seemed to have it strongly suggested to them, and pressed upon them, to do as this person had done. And many that seemed to be under no melancholy, some pious persons, that had no special darkness, or doubts about the goodness of their state, nor were under any special trouble or concern of mind about any thing spiritual or temporal, yet had it urged upon them, as if somebody had spoken to them, *Cut your own throat, now is a good opportunity. Now, now!* So that they were obliged to fight with all their might to resist it, and yet no reason suggested to them why they should do it.

About the same time there were two remarkable instances of persons led away with strange, enthusiastic delusions—one at Suffield, another at South Hadley. That which has made the greatest noise in the country was of the man at South Hadley, whose delusion was, that he thought himself divinely instructed to direct a poor man in melancholy and despairing circumstances, to say certain words in prayer to God, as recorded in Psal. cxvi. 4. for his own relief. The man is esteemed a pious man. I have, since this error of his, had a particular acquaintance with him; and I believe none would question his piety, that had such an acquaintance. He gave me a particular account of the manner how he was deluded, which is too long to be here inserted. But in short, he was exceedingly rejoiced and elevated with this extraordinary work, so carried on in this part of the country; and was possessed with an opinion that it was the beginning of the glorious times of the church spoken of in scripture: and had read it as the opinion of some divines, that there would be many in these times that should be endued with

extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and had embraced the notion; though he had at first no apprehensions that any besides ministers would have such gifts. But he since exceedingly laments the dishonor he has done to God, and the wound he has given religion in it, and has lain low before God and man for it.

After these things, the instances of conversion were rare here in comparison of what they had before been, (though that remarkable instance of the little child was after this,) and the Spirit of God not long after this time appeared very sensibly withdrawing from all parts of the county; (though we have heard of its going on in some places of Connecticut, and that it continues to be carried on even to this day.) But religion remained here, and I believe in some other places, the main subject of conversation for several months after this. And there were some turns, wherein God's work seemed something to revive, and we were ready to hope that all was going to be renewed again: yet in the main there was a gradual decline of that general, engaged, lively spirit in religion, which had been before. Several things have happened since, that have diverted people's minds, and turned their conversation more to others' affairs, particularly his excellency, the governor, coming to this place, and the committee of general court, on the treaty with the Indians; and afterwards the Springfield controversy; and since that, our people in this town have been engaged in the building of a new meeting-house; and some other occurrences might be mentioned, that have seemed to have this effect. But as to those that have been thought to be converted among us, in this time, they generally seem to be persons that have had an abiding change wrought on them. I have had particular acquaintance with many of them since, and they generally appear to be persons that have a new sense of things, new apprehensions and views of God, of the divine attributes, and Jesus Christ, and the great things of the gospel: they have a new sense of the truth of them, and they affect them in a

new manner; though it is very far from being always alike with them, neither can they revive a sense of things when they please. Their hearts are often touched, and sometimes filled, with new sweetnesses and delights; there seems to be an inward ardor and burning of heart that they express, the like to which they never experienced before; sometimes, perhaps, occasioned only by the mention of Christ's name, or some one of the divine perfections. There are new appetites, and a new kind of breathings and pantings of heart, and groanings that cannot be uttered. There is a new kind of inward labor and struggle of soul towards heaven and holiness.

Some, that before were very rough in their temper and manners, seem to be remarkably softened and sweetened. And some have had their souls exceedingly filled, and overwhelmed with light, love, and comfort, long since the work of God has ceased to be so remarkably carried on in a general way: and some have had much greater experiences of this nature than they had before. And there is still a great deal of religious conversation continued in the town, among young and old; a religious disposition appears to be still maintained among our people, by their upholding frequent private religious meetings; and all sorts are generally worshiping God at such meetings, on sabbath-nights, and in the evening after our public lecture. Many children in the town do still keep up such meetings among themselves. I know of no one young person in the town that has returned to former ways, or looseness and extravagancy in any respect; but we still remain a reformed people, and God has evidently made us a new people.

I cannot say that there has been no instance of any one person that has carried himself so that others should justly be stumbled concerning his profession; nor am I so vain as to imagine that we have not been mistaken concerning any that we have entertained a good opinion of, or that there are none pass among us for sheep, that are indeed wolves in

sheep's clothing, who probably may some time or other discover themselves by their fruit. We are not so pure but that we have great cause to be humbled and ashamed that we are so impure, nor so religious but that those that watch for our halting may see things in us whence they may take occasion to reproach us and religion : but in the main there has been a great and marvelous work of conversion and sanctification among the people here ; and they have paid all due respect to those who have been blest of God to be the instruments of it. Both old and young have shown a forwardness to hearken not only to my counsels, but even to my reproofs from the pulpit.

A great part of the country have not received the most favorable thoughts of this affair ; and to this day many retain a jealousy concerning it, and prejudice against it. I have reason to think that the meanness and weakness of the instrument that has been made use of in this town, has prejudiced many against it ; it does not appear to me strange that it should be so : but yet this circumstance of this great work of God is analogous to other circumstances of it. God has so ordered the manner of the work in many respects, as very signally and remarkably to show it to be his own peculiar and immediate work, and to secure the glory of it wholly to his own almighty power and sovereign grace. And whatever the circumstances and means have been, and though we are so unworthy, yet so hath it pleased God to work ! And we are evidently a people blessed of the Lord ! And here, in this corner of the world, God dwells, and manifests his glory.

Thus, Rev. Sir, I have given a large and particular account of this remarkable affair ; and yet, considering how manifold God's works have been among us, that are worthy to be written, it is but a brief one. I should have sent it much sooner, had I not been greatly hindered by illness in my family, and also in myself. It is, probably, much larger

than you expected, and it may be than you would have chosen. I thought that the extraordinariness of the thing, and the innumerable misrepresentations which have gone abroad of it, many of which have, doubtless, reached your ears, made it necessary that I should be particular. But I would leave it entirely to your wisdom to make what use of it you think best, to send a part of it to England, or all, or none, if you think it not worthy ; or otherwise to dispose of it as you may think most for God's glory, and the interest of religion. If you are pleased to send any thing to the Rev. Dr. Guyse, I should be glad to have it signified to him as my humble desire, that since he, and the congregation to which he preached, have been pleased to take so much notice of us as they have—that they would also think of us at the throne of grace, and seek there for us, that God would not forsake us, but enable us to bring forth fruit answerable to our profession and our mercies, and that our light may shine before men, that others seeing our good works, may glorify our Father who is in heaven.

When I first heard of the notice the Rev. Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse took of God's mercies to us, I took occasion to inform our congregation of it in a discourse from these words: "A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid." And having since seen a particular account of the notice the Rev. Dr. Guyse, and the congregation he preached to, took of it, in a letter you wrote to my honored uncle Williams, I read that part of your letter to the congregation, and labored as much as in me lay to enforce their duty from it. The congregation were very sensibly moved and affected at both times.

I humbly request of you, Rev. Sir, your prayers for this county, in its present melancholy circumstances, into which it is brought by the Springfield quarrel, which, doubtless, above all things that have happened, has tended to put a stop to the glorious work here, and to prejudice this country

against it, and hinder the propagation of it. I also ask your prayers for this town, and would particularly beg an interest in them for him, who is,

Honored sir,
With humble respect,
Your obedient son and servant,
JONATHAN EDWARDS.

Northampton,
Nov. 6, 1736.

THOUGHTS

ON

THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION

IN NEW ENGLAND,

AND

THE WAY IN WHICH IT OUGHT TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND PROMOTED.

IN FIVE PARTS.

BY JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, AT NORTHAMPTON.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.....ISAIAH xl. 3.

PREFACE.

In the ensuing treatise, I condemn ministers assuming, or taking too much upon them, and appearing as though they supposed that they were the persons to whom it especially belonged to dictate, direct, and determine; but perhaps shall be thought to be very guilty of it myself: and some, when they read this treatise, may be ready to say that I condemn this in others, that I may have the monopoly of it. I confess that I have taken a great deal of liberty freely to express my thoughts concerning almost every thing appertaining to the wonderful work of God that has of late been carried on in the land, and to declare what has appeared to me to be the mind of God, concerning the duty and obligations of all sorts of persons, and even those that are my superiors and fathers, ministers of the gospel and civil rulers: but yet I hope the liberty I have taken is not greater than can be justified. In a free nation, such liberty of the press is allowed, that every author takes leave without offense, freely to speak his opinion concerning the management of public affairs, and the duty of the legislature, and those that are at the head of the administration, though vastly his superiors: as now at this day, private subjects offer their sentiments to the public, from the press, concerning the management of the war with Spain; freely declaring what they think to be the duty of parliament, and the principal ministers of state, &c. We in New England are at this day engaged in a more important war: and I am sure if we consider the sad jangling and confusion that has attended it, we shall confess that it is highly requisite that somebody should speak his mind concerning the way in which it ought to be managed: and that not only a few of the many particulars, that are the matter of strife in the land, should be debated on the one side and the other in pamphlets; (as has of late been done with heat and fierceness enough;) which does not tend to bring the contention in general to

an end, but rather to inflame it, and increase the uproar: but that something should be published to bring the affair in general, and the many things that attend it that are the subjects of debate, under a particular consideration. And certainly it is high time that this was done. If private persons may speak their minds without arrogance, much more may a minister of the kingdom of Christ speak freely about things of this nature which do so nearly concern the interest of the kingdom of his Lord and Master, at so important a juncture. If some elder minister had undertaken this, I acknowledge it would have been more proper; but I have heard of no such thing a doing, or like to be done. I hope therefore I shall be excused for undertaking such a piece of work. I think that nothing that I have said can justly be interpreted, as though I would impose my thoughts upon any, or did not suppose that others have equal right to think for themselves, with myself. We are not accountable one to another for our thoughts; but we must all give an account to Him who searches our hearts, and has doubtless his eye especially upon us at such an extraordinary season as this. If I have well confirmed my opinion concerning this work, and the way in which it should be acknowledged and promoted, with scripture and reason, I hope others that read it will receive it as a manifestation of the mind and will of God. If others would hold forth further light to me in any of these particulars, I hope I should thankfully receive it. I think I have been made in some measure sensible, and much more of late than formerly, of my need of more wisdom than I have. I make it my rule to lay hold of light and embrace it wherever I see it, though held forth by a child or an enemy. If I have assumed too much in the following discourse, and have spoken in a manner that savors of a spirit of pride, no wonder that others can better discern it than I myself. If it be so, I ask pardon, and beg the prayers of every Christian reader, that I may have more light, humility, and zeal; and that I may be favored with such measures of the divine Spirit, as a minister of the gospel stands in need of at such an extraordinary season.

THOUGHTS ON THE REVIVAL, &c.

PART I.

SHOWING THAT THE EXTRAORDINARY WORK THAT HAS OF LATE BEEN GOING ON IN THIS LAND, IS A GLORIOUS WORK OF GOD.

THE error of those who have had ill thoughts of the great religious operation on the minds of men, that has been carried on of late in New England (so far as the ground of such an error has been in the understanding, and not in the disposition) seems fundamentally to lie in three things:

First, In judging of this work *à priori*.

Secondly, In not taking the holy scriptures as a whole rule whereby to judge of such operations.

Thirdly, In not justly separating and distinguishing the good from the bad.

SECTION I.

We should not judge of this work à priori, *but by its effects.*

They have greatly erred in the way in which they have gone about to try this work, whether it be a work of the Spirit of God or no, viz. in judging of it *à priori*; from the way that it began, the instruments that have been employed, the means that have been made use of, and the methods

that have been taken and succeeded in carrying it on. Whereas, if we duly consider the matter, it will evidently appear that such a work is not to be judged of *à priori*, but *à posteriori:* we are to observe the effect wrought; and if, upon examination of it, it be found to be agreeable to the word of God, we are bound, without more ado, to rest in it as God's work; and shall be like to be rebuked for our arrogance, if we refuse so to do till God shall explain to us how he has brought this effect to pass, or why he has made use of such and such means in doing it. Those texts are enough to cause us with trembling to forbear such a way of proceeding in judging of a work of God's Spirit, Isa. xl. 13, 14. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and who taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" John iii. 8. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." We hear the sound, we perceive the effect, and from thence we judge that the wind does indeed blow; without waiting before we pass this judgment, first, to be satisfied what should be the cause of the wind's blowing from such a part of the heavens, and how it should come to pass that it should blow in such a manner, at such a time. To judge *à priori*, is a a wrong way of judging of any of the works of God. We are not to resolve that we will first be satisfied how God brought this for the other effect to pass, and why he hath made it thus, or why it has pleased him to take such a course, and to use such and such means, before we will acknowledge his work, and give him the glory of it. This is too much for the *clay* to take upon it with respect to the *potter*. "God gives not an account of his matters: His judgments are a great deep: He hath his way in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known; and who shall teach God knowledge, or enjoin him

his way, or say unto him what doest thou? We know not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so we know not the works of God who maketh all." No wonder therefore if those that go this forbidden way to work, in judging of the present wonderful operation, are perplexed and confounded. We ought to take heed that we do not expose ourselves to the calamity of those who pried into the ark of God, when God mercifully returned it to Israel, after it had departed from them.

Indeed God has not taken that course, nor made use of those means, to begin and carry on this great work, which men in their wisdom would have thought most advisable, if he had asked their counsel; but quite the contrary. But it appears to me that the great God has wrought like himself, in the manner of his carrying on this work; so as very much to show his own glory, and exalt his own sovereignity, power and all-sufficiency, and pour contempt on all that human strength, wisdom, prudence, and sufficiency, that men have been wont to trust, and to glory in; and so as greatly to cross, rebuke, and chastise the pride and corruptions of men; in a fulfillment of that, Isa. ii. 17. "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." God doth thus, in intermingling in his providence so many stumbling-blocks with this work; in suffering so much of human weakness and infirmity to appear; and in ordering so many things that are mysterious to men's wisdom: in pouring out his Spirit chiefly on the common people, and bestowing his greatest and highest favors upon them, admitting them nearer to himself than the great, the honorable, the rich, and the learned, agreeable to that prophecy, Zech. xii. 7. "The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify themselves against Judah." Those that dwelt in the tents of Judah were the common

people that dwelt in the country, and were of inferior rank. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were their citizens, their men of wealth, and figure: and Jerusalem also was the chief place of the habitation or resort of their priests, and Levites, and their officers and judges; there sat the great Sanhedrim. The house of David were the highest rank of all, the royal family, and the great men that were round about the king. It is evident by the context, that this prophecy has respect to something further than the saving the people out of the Babylonish captivity.

God in this work has begun at the lower end, and he has made use of the weak and foolish things of the world to carry on his work. The ministers that have been chiefly improved, some of them have been mere babes in age and standing, and some of them such as have not been so high in reputation among their fellows as many others; and God has suffered their infirmities to appear in the sight of others, so as much to displease them; and at the same time it has pleased God to improve them, and greatly to succeed them, while he has not so succeeded others that are generally reputed vastly their superiors. Yea, there is reason to think that it has pleased God to make use of the infirmities and sins of some that he has improved and succeeded; as particularly their imprudent and rash zeal, and censorious spirit, to chastise the deadness, negligence, earthly-mindedness, and vanity that have been found among ministers in the late times of general declension and deadness, wherein wise virgins and foolish, ministers and people, have sunk into such a deep sleep. These things in ministers of the gospel, that go forth as the embassadors of Christ, and have the care of immortal souls, are extremely abominable to God; vastly more hateful in his sight than all the imprudence, and intemperate heats, wildness, and distraction (as some call it) of these zealous preachers. A supine carelessness, and a vain, carnal, worldly spirit, in a minister of the gospel, is the worst madness and distraction in the sight of God. God may also

make use at this day, of the unchristian censoriousness of some preachers, the more to humble and purify some of his own children and true servants, that have been wrongfully censured, to fit them for more eminent service and future honor that he designs them for.

SECTION II.

We should judge by the rule of scripture.

ANOTHER foundation-error of those that do not acknowledge the divinity of this work, is not taking the holy scriptures as a *whole*, and in itself a sufficient rule to judge of such things by. They that have one certain consistent rule to judge by, are like to come to some clear determination; but they that have half a dozen different rules to make the thing they would judge of agree to, no wonder that instead of justly and clearly determining, they do but perplex and darken themselves and others. They that would learn the true measure of any thing, and will have many different measures to try it by, and find in it a conformity to, have a task that they will not accomplish.

Those that I am speaking of, will indeed make some use of scripture, so far as they think it serves their turn; but do not make use of it *alone*, as a rule sufficient by itself, but make as much, and a great deal more use of other things, diverse and wide from it, to judge of this work by. As particularly,

1. Some make *philosophy*, instead of the holy scriptures, their rule of judging of this work; particularly the philosophical notions they entertain of the nature of the soul, its faculties and affections. Some are ready to say, "There is but little sober solid religion in this work: it is little else but flash and noise. Religion now-a-days all runs out into transports

and high flights of the passions and affections." In their philosophy, the affections of the soul are something diverse from the will, and not appertaining to the noblest part of the soul, but the meanest principles that it has, that belong to men as partaking of animal nature, and what he has in common with the brute creation, rather than any thing whereby he is conformed to angels and pure spirits. And though they acknowledge that there is a good use may be made of the affections in religion, yet they suppose that the substantial part of religion does not consist in them, but that they are rather to be looked upon as something adventitious and accidental in Christianity.

But I cannot but think that these gentlemen labor under great mistakes, both in their philosophy and divinity. It is true, distinction must be made in the affections or passions. There is a great deal of difference in high and raised affections, which must be distinguished by the skill of the observer. Some are much more solid than others. There are many exercises of the affections that are very flashy, and little to be depended on; and oftentimes there is a great deal that appertains to them, or rather that is the effect of them, that has its seat in animal nature, and is very much owing to the constitution and frame of the body; and that which sometimes more especially obtains the name of passion, is nothing solid or substantial. But it is false philosophy to suppose this to be the case with all exercises of affection in the soul, or with all great and high affections; and false divinity to suppose that religious affections do not appertain to the substance and essence of Christianity: on the contrary, it seems to me that the very life and soul of all true religion consists in them.

I humbly conceive that the affections of the soul are not properly distinguished from the will, as though they were two faculties in the soul. All acts of the affections of the soul are in some sense acts of the will, and all acts of the will are acts of the affections. All exercises of the will are, in some degree or other, exercises of the soul's appetition or aversion;

or which is the same thing, of its love or hatred. The soul wills one thing rather than another, or chooses one thing rather than another, no otherwise than as it loves one thing more than another; but love and hatred are affections of the soul: and therefore all acts of the will are truly acts of the affections; though the exercises of the will do not obtain the name of passions, unless the will, either in its aversion or opposition, be exercised in a high degree, or in a vigorous and lively manner.

All will allow that true virtue or holiness has its seat chiefly in the heart, rather than in the head: it therefore follows from what has been said already, that it consists chiefly in holy *affections*. The things of religion take place in men's hearts, no further than they are *affected* with them. The informing of the understanding is all vain, any farther than it *affects* the heart; or which is the same thing, has influence on the *affections*.

Those gentlemen that make light of these raised affections in religion, will doubtless allow that true religion and holiness, as it has its seat in the heart, is capable of very high degrees, and high exercises in the soul. As for instance: they will doubtless allow that the holiness of the heart or will is capable of being raised to a hundred times as great a degree of strength as it is in the most eminent saint on earth, or to be exerted in a hundred times so strong and vigorous exercises of the heart; and yet be true religion or holiness still, but only in a high degree. Now therefore I would ask them, by what name they will call these high and vigorous exercises of the will or heart? Are they not high affections? What can they consist in, but high acts of love; strong and vigorous exercises of benevolence and complacence; high, exalting, and admiring thoughts of God and his perfections; strong desires after God, &c.? And now what are we come to, but high and raised affections? Yea, those very same high and raised affections that before they objected against, or made light of, as worthy of little regard.

I suppose furthermore that all will allow that there is nothing but solid religion in heaven: but that there, religion and holiness of heart is raised to an exceeding great height, to strong, high, exalted exercises of heart. Now what other kinds of such exceeding strong and high exercises of the heart, or of holiness as it has its seat in their hearts, can we devise for them, but only holy affections, high degrees of actings of love to God, rejoicing in God, admiring of God, &c.? Therefore these things in the saints and angels in heaven are not to be despised and cashiered by the name of great heats and transports of the passions.

And it will doubtless be yet further allowed, that the more eminent the saints are on earth, and the stronger their grace is, and the higher its exercises are, the more they are like the saints in heaven; i. e. (by what has been just now observed) the more they have of high or raised affections in religion.

Though there are false affections in religion, and affections that in some respects are raised high, that are flashy, yet undoubtedly there are also true, holy, and solid affections; and the higher these are raised, the better: and if they are raised to an exceeding great height, they are not to be thought meanly of, or suspected, merely because of their great degree, but on the contrary to be esteemed and rejoiced in. Charity, or divine love, is in scripture represented as the sum of all the religion of the heart; but this is nothing but a holy *affection:* and therefore, in proportion as this is firmly fixed in the soul, and raised to a great height, the more eminent a person is in holiness. Divine love or charity is represented as the sum of all the religion of heaven, and that wherein mainly the religion of the church in its more perfect state on earth shall consist, when knowledge, and tongues, and prophecyings shall cease; and therefore the higher this holy affection is raised in the church of God, or in a gracious soul, the more excellent and perfect is the state of the church, or a particular soul.

If we take the scriptures for our rule, then the greater and higher are the exercises of love to God, delight and complacence in God, desires and longings after God, delight in the children of God, love to mankind, brokenness of heart, abhorrence of sin, and self-abhorrence for sin: and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and joy in the Holy Ghost, joy unspeakable and full of glory; admiring thoughts of God, exulting and glorying in God; so much the higher is Christ's religion, or that virtue which he and his apostles taught, raised in the soul.

It is a stumbling to some, that religious affections should seem to be so powerful, or that they should be so violent (as they express it) in some persons: they are therefore ready to doubt whether it can be the Spirit of God, or whether this vehemence be not rather a sign of the operation of an evil spirit. But why should such a doubt arise from no other ground than this? What is represented in scripture, as more powerful in its effects, than the Spirit of God? which is therefore called "the power of the Highest," Luke i. 35; and its saving effect in the soul called "the power of godliness." So we read of the "demonstration of the Spirit, and of power," 1 Cor. ii. 4. And it is said to operate in the minds of men with the "exceeding greatness of divine power," and "according to the working of God's mighty power," Eph. i. 19. So we read of "the effectual working of his power," Eph. iii. 7. And of the "power that worketh in Christians," v. 20. And of the "glorious power," of God in the operations of the spirit, Col. i. 11. And of "the work of faith," its being wrought "with power," 2 Thess. i. 11. And in 2 Tim. i. 7. the Spirit of God is called "the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." So the Spirit is represented by a mighty wind, and by fire, things most powerful in their operation.

2. Many are guilty of not taking the holy scriptures as a sufficient and whole rule, whereby to judge of this work, whether it be the work of God; in that they judge by those

things which the scripture does not give as any signs or marks whereby to judge one way or the other, and therefore do in no wise belong to the scripture rule of judging, viz. the effects that religious exercises and affections of mind have upon the body. Scripture rules respect the state of the mind, and persons' moral conduct, and voluntary behavior, and not the physical state of the body. The design of the scripture is to teach us divinity, and not physic and anatomy. Ministers are made the watchmen of men's souls, and not their bodies; and therefore the great rule which God has committed into their hands, is to make them divines, and not physicians. Christ knew what instructions and rules his church would stand in need of better than we do; and if he had seen it needful in order to the church's safety, he doubtless would have given ministers rules to judge of bodily effects, and would have told them how the pulse should beat under such and such religious exercises of mind; when men should look pale, and when they should shed tears; when they should tremble, and whether or no they should ever be faint or cry out; or whether the body should ever be put into convulsions: he probably would have put some book into their hands, that should have tended to make them excellent anatomists and physicians: but he has not done it, because he did not see it to be needful. He judged, that if ministers thoroughly did their duty as watchmen and overseers of the state and frame of men's souls, and of their voluntary conduct, according to the rules he had given, his church would be well provided for, as to its safety in these matters. And therefore those ministers of Christ and overseers of souls, that busy themselves, and are full of concern about the involuntary motions of the fluids and solids of men's bodies, and from thence are full of doubts and suspicions of the cause, when nothing appears but that the state and frame of their minds, and their voluntary behavior is good, and agreeable to God's word; I say, such ministers go out of the place that Christ has set them in, and leave their

proper business, as much as if they should undertake to tell who are under the influence of the Spirit by their looks or their gait. I cannot see which way we are in danger, or how the devil is like to get any notable advantage against us, if we do but thoroughly do our duty with respect to those two things, viz. the state of person's minds, and their moral conduct, seeing to it that they may be maintained in an agreeableness to the rules that Christ has given us. If things are but kept right in these respects, our fears and suspicions arising from extraordinary bodily effects seem wholly groundless.

The most specious thing that is alledged against these extraordinary effects on the body, is, that the body is impaired and health wronged; and that it is hard to think that God, in the merciful influences of his Spirit on men, would wound their bodies, and impair their health. But if it were so pretty commonly, or in multiplied instances (which I do not suppose it is), that persons received a lasting wound to their health by extraordinary religious impressions made upon their minds, yet it is too much for us to determine that God shall never bring an outward calamity, in bestowing a vastly greater spiritual and eternal good. Jacob, in doing his duty in wrestling with God for the blessing, and while God was striving with him, at the same time that he received the blessing from God, suffered a great outward calamity from his hand: God impaired his body so that he never got over it as long as he lived. He gave him the blessing, but sent him away halting on his thigh, and he went lame all his life after. And yet this is not mentioned as if it were any diminution of the great mercy of God to him, when God blessed him, and he received his name Israel, because as a prince he had power with God, and had prevailed.

But, say some, the operations of the Spirit of God are of a benign nature; nothing is of a more kind influence on human nature than the merciful breathings of God's own Spirit.

But it has been a thing generally supposed and allowed in the church of God, till now, that there is such a thing as being sick of love to Christ, or having the bodily strength weakened by strong and vigorous exercises of love to him. And however kind to human nature the influences of the Spirit of God are, yet nobody doubts but that divine and eternal things, as they may be discovered, would overpower the nature of man in its present weak state; and that therefore the body, in its present weakness, is not fitted for the views and pleasures and employments of heaven: and that if God did discover but a little of that which is seen by the saints and angels in heaven, our frail natures would sink under it. Indeed, I know not what persons may deny now, to defend themselves in a cause they have had their spirits long engaged in, but I know these things did not use to be denied or doubted of. Let us rationally consider what we profess to believe of the infinite greatness of the things of God, the divine wrath, the divine glory, and the divine infinite love and grace in Jesus Christ, and the vastness and infinite importance of the things of eternity; and how reasonable it is to suppose that if it pleases God a little to withdraw the veil, and let in light into the soul, and give something of a view of the great things of another world in their transcendent and infinite greatness, that human nature, that is as the grass, a shaking leaf, a weak withering flower, should totter under such a discovery? Such a bubble is too weak to bear the weight of a view of things that are so vast. Alas! What is such dust and ashes, that it should support itself under the view of the awful wrath or infinite glory and love of Jehovah! No wonder therefore that it is said, "No man can see me and live, and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." That external glory and majesty of Christ which Daniel saw when "there remained no strength in him, and his comeliness was turned in him into corruption," Dan. x. 6, 7, 8., and which the apostle John saw when he fell at his feet as dead, was but an image

or shadow of that spiritual glory and majesty of Christ which will be manifested in the souls of the saints in another world, and which is sometimes, in some degree, manifested to the soul in this world, by the influences of the Spirit of God. And if the beholding the image and external representation of this spiritual majesty and glory, did so overpower human nature, is it unreasonable to suppose that a sight of the spiritual glory itself, which is the substance of which that was but the shadow, should have as powerful an effect? The prophet Habakkuk, speaking of the awful manifestations God made of his majesty and wrath, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, and at Mount Sinai, where he gave the law; and of the merciful influence and strong impression God caused it to have upon him, to the end that he might be saved from that wrath, and rest in the day of trouble, says, Hab. iii. 16. "When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones, I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble." Which is much such an effect as the discovery of the same majesty and wrath, in the same awful voice from Mount Sinai, has had upon many in these days, and to the same purposes, viz. to give them rest in the day of trouble, and save them from that wrath. The Psalmist also speaks of very much such an effect as I have often seen on persons under religious affections of late, Psalm cxix. 131. "I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for thy commandments."

God is pleased sometimes in dealing forth spiritual blessings to his people, in some respect to exceed the capacity of the vessel, in its present scantiness, so that he does not only fill it full, but he makes their cup to run over, agreeable to Psalm xxiii. 5., and pours out a blessing, sometimes in such a manner and measure that there is not room enough to receive it, Mal. iii. 10., and gives them more riches than they can carry away; as he did to Jehoshaphat and his people, in a time of great favor, by the word of his prophet Jeha-

ziel, in answer to an earnest prayer, when the people blessed the Lord in the valley of Berachah, 2 Chron. xx. 25, 26. It has been with the disciples of Christ, for a long time, a time of great emptiness upon spiritual accounts: they have gone hungry, and have been toiling in vain, during a dark season, a time of night with the church of God; as it was with the disciples of old, when they had toiled all night for something to eat and caught nothing, Luke v. 5, and John xxi. 3. But now, the morning being come, Jesus appears to his disciples, and takes a compassionate notice of their wants, and says to them, "Children, have ye any meat?" and gives some of them such abundance of food, that they are not able to draw their net; yea, so that their net breaks, and their vessel is overloaded, and begins to sink; as it was with the disciples of old, Luke v. 6, 7, and John xxi. 6.

We cannot determine that God never shall give any person so much of a discovery of himself, not only as to weaken their bodies, but to take away their lives. It is supposed by very learned and judicious divines, that Moses' life was taken away after this manner; and this has also been supposed to be the case with some other saints. Yea, I do not see any solid sure grounds any have to determine, that God shall never make such strong impressions on the mind by his Spirit, that shall be an occasion of so impairing the frame of the body, and particularly that part of the body, the brain, that persons shall be deprived of the use of reason. As I said before, it is too much for us to determine, that God will not bring an outward calamity in bestowing spiritual and eternal blessings: so it is too much for us to determine, how great an outward calamity he will bring. If God give a great increase of discoveries of himself, and of love to him, the benefit is infinitely greater than the calamity, though the life should presently after be taken away; yea, though the soul should not immediately be taken to heaven, but should lie some years in a deep sleep, and then be taken to heaven: or, which is much the same thing, if it be deprived of the use

of its faculties, and be inactive and unserviceable, as if it lay in a deep sleep for some years, and then should pass into glory. We cannot determine how great a calamity distraction is, when considered with all its consequences, and all that might have been consequent, if the distraction had not happened; nor indeed whether (thus considered) it be any calamity at all, or whether it be not a mercy, by preventing some great sin, or some more dreadful thing, if it had not been. It is a great fault in us to limit a sovereign, all-wise God, whose judgments are a great deep, and his ways past finding out, where he has not limited himself, and in things concerning which he has not told us what his way shall be. It is remarkable, considering in what multitudes of instances, and to how great a degree, the frame of the body has been overpowered of late, that persons' lives have notwithstanding been preserved, and that the instances of those that have been deprived of reason have been so very few, and those, perhaps, all of them, persons under the peculiar disadvantage of a weak, vapory habit of body. A merciful and careful divine hand is very manifest in it, that in so many instances where the ship has begun to sink, yet it has been upheld, and has not totally sunk. The instances of such as have been deprived of reason are so few, that certainly they are not enough to cause us to be in any fright, as though this work that has been carried on in the country, was like to be of baneful influence; unless we are disposed to gather up all that we can to darken it, and set it forth in frightful colors.

There is one particular kind of exercise and concern of mind, that many have been overpowered by, that has been especially stumbling to some; and that is the deep concern and distress that they have been in for the souls of others. I am sorry that any put us to the trouble of doing that which seems so needless, as defending such a thing as this. It seems like mere trifling in so plain a case, to enter into a formal and particular debate, in order to determine whether there be any thing in the greatness and importance of the case,

that will answer, and bear a proportion to the greatness of the concern that some have manifested. Men may be allowed, from no higher a principle than common ingenuity and humanity, to be very deeply concerned, and greatly exercised in mind, at seeing others in great danger of no greater a calamity than drowning, or being burnt up in a house on fire. And if so, then doubtless it will be allowed to be equally reasonable, if they saw them in danger of a calamity ten times greater to be still much more concerned; and so much more still, if the calamity was still vastly greater. And why then should it be thought unreasonable, and looked upon with a very suspicious eye, as if it must come from some bad cause, when persons are extremely concerned at seeing others in very great danger of suffering the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God to all eternity? And besides it will doubtless be allowed that those that have very great degrees of the Spirit of God, that is a spirit of love, may well be supposed to have vastly more of love and compassion to their fellow-creatures, than those that are influenced only by common humanity. Why should it be thought strange that those that are full of the Spirit of Christ, should be proportionably, in their love to souls, like to Christ? who had so strong a love to them and concern for them, as to be willing to drink the dregs of the cup of God's fury for them; and at the same time that he offered up his blood for souls, offered up also as their high priest, strong crying and tears, with an extreme agony, wherein the soul of Christ was as it were in travail for the souls of the elect; and therefore in saving them he is said to see of the *travail* of his soul. As such a spirit of love to and concern for souls was the Spirit of Christ, so it is the spirit of the church; and therefore the church, in desiring and seeking that Christ might be brought forth in the world, and in the souls of men, is represented, Rev. xii. as "a woman crying, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." The spirit of those that have been in distress for the souls of others, so far as I can discern, seems not

to be different from that of the apostle who travailed for souls, and was ready to wish himself accursed from Christ for others. And that of the psalmist, Psalm cxix. 53. "Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law." And v. 136. "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." And that of the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. iv. 19. "My bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my very heart! My heart maketh a noise in me! I cannot hold my peace! Because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war!" And so, chap. ix. 1. and xiii. 17. and xiv. 17. and Isa. xxii. 4. We read of Mordecai, when he saw his people in danger of being destroyed with a temporal destruction, Esther iv. 1. that he "rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry." And why then should persons be thought to be distracted, when they cannot forbear crying out at the consideration of the misery of those that are going to eternal destruction?

3. Another thing that some make their rule to judge of this work by, instead of the holy scriptures, is history, or former observation. Herein they err two ways: First, if there be any thing new and extraordinary in the circumstances of this work that was not observed in former times, that is a rule with them to reject this work as not the work of God. Herein they make that their rule, that God has not given them for their rule; and limit God, where he has not limited himself. And this is especially unreasonable in this case: for whosoever has well weighed the wonderful and mysterious methods of Divine Wisdom, in carrying on the work of the new creation, or in the progress of the work of redemption from the first promise of the seed of the woman to this time may easily observe that it has all along been God's manner to open new scenes, and to bring forth to view things new and wonderful, such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of men or angels, to the

astonishment of heaven and earth, not only in the revelation he makes of his mind and will, but also in the works of his hands. As the old creation was carried on through six days, and appeared all complete, settled in a state of rest on the seventh; so the new creation, which is immensely the greatest and most glorious work, is carried on in a gradual progress, from the fall of man to the consummation of all things at the end of the world. And as in the progress of the old creation there were still new things accomplished; new wonders appeared every day in the sight of the angels, the spectators of that work; while those morning stars sang together, new scenes were opened or things that they had not seen before till the whole was finished; so it is in the progress of the new creation. So that that promise, Isa. lxiv. 4. "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him;" though it had a glorious fulfillment in the days of Christ and the apostles, as the words are applied, 1 Cor. ii. 9. yet it always remains to be fulfilled in the things that are yet behind, till the new creation is finished, at Christ's delivering up the kingdom to the Father. And we live in those latter days, wherein we may be especially warranted to expect that things will be accomplished concerning which it will be said, Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things?

And besides, those things in this work that have been chiefly complained of as new, are not so new as has been generally imagined: though they have been much more frequent lately, in proportion to the uncommon degree, extent and swiftness, and other extraordinary circumstances of the work, yet they are not new in their kind, but are things of the same nature as have been found and well approved of in the church of God before, from time to time.

We have a remarkable instance in Mr. Bolton, that noted minister of the church of England, who, being awakened

by the preaching of the famous Mr. Perkins, minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, was subject to such terrors as threw him to the ground, and caused him to roar with anguish; and the pangs of the new birth in him were such, that he lay pale and without sense, like one dead; as we have an account in the *Fulfilling of the Scripture*, the 5th edition, p. 103, 104. We have an account in the same page of another, whose comforts under the sunshine of God's presence were so great, that he could not forbear crying out in a transport, and expressing in exclamations, the great sense he had of forgiving mercy and his assurance of God's love. And we have a remarkable instance in the life of Mr. George Trosse, written by himself, (who, of a notoriously vicious profligate liver, became an eminent saint and minister of the gospel) of terrors occasioned by awakenings of conscience, so overpowering the body as to deprive, for some time, of the use of reason.

Yea, such extraordinary external effects of inward impressions have not only been to be found in here and there a single person, but there have also before now been times wherein many have been thus affected, in some particular parts of the church of God; and such effects have appeared in congregations, in many at once. So it was in the year 1625, in the west of Scotland, in a time of great outpouring of the Spirit of God. It was then a frequent thing for many to be so extraordinarily seized with terror in the hearing of the word, by the Spirit of God convincing them of sin, that they fell down, and were carried out of the church, who afterwards proved most solid and lively Christians; as the author of the *Fulfilling of the Scripture* informs us, p. 185. The same author, in the preceding page, informs of many in France that were so wonderfully affected with the preaching of the gospel, in the time of those famous divines, Farel and Viret, that for a time they could not follow their secular business. And p. 186, of many in Ireland, in a time of great outpouring of the Spirit there, in the year 1628, that

were so filled with divine comforts, and a sense of God, that they made but little use of either meat, drink, or sleep, and professed that they did not feel the need thereof. The same author gives an account of very much such things in Mrs. Catharine Brettergh, of Lancashire, in England, p. 391, 392, as have been cried out of, here amongst us, as wild and distracted: how that after great distress, which very much affected her body, the sweat sometimes bursting out upon her, God did so break in upon her mind with light and discoveries of himself, that she was forced to burst out, crying, "O the joys, the joys, the joys, that I feel in my soul! O they be wonderful, they be wonderful! The place where I now am is sweet and pleasant! How comfortable is the sweetness I feel, that delights my soul! The taste is precious; do you not feel it? O so sweet as it is!" And at other times, "O my sweet Savior, shall I be one with thee, as thou art one with the Father? And dost thou so love me that am but dust, to make me partaker of glory with Christ? O how wonderful is thy love! And O that my tongue and heart were able to sound forth thy praises as I ought." At another time she burst forth thus: "Yea, Lord, I feel thy mercy, and am assured of thy love! And so certain am I thereof, as thou art that God of truth, even so certainly do I know myself to be thine, O Lord my God; and this my soul knoweth right well!" Which last words she again doubled. To a grave minister, one Mr. Harrison, then with her, she said, "My soul hath been compassed with the terrors of death, the sorrows of hell were upon me, and a wilderness of wo was in me; but blessed, blessed, blessed be the Lord my God! he hath brought me to a place of rest, even to the sweet running waters of life. The way I now go in is a sweet and easy way, strewed with flowers; he hath brought me into a place more sweet than the garden of Eden. O the joy, the joy, the delights and joy that I feel! O how wonderful!"

Great outcries under awakenings were more frequently heard of in former times in the country, than they have been of late, as some aged persons now living do testify: particularly I think fit here to insert a testimony of my honored father, of what he remembers formerly to have heard.

"I well remember that one Mr. Alexander Allyn, a Scots gentleman of good credit, that dwelt formerly in this town, showed me a letter that came from Scotland, that gave an account of a sermon preached in the city of Edinburgh (as I remember) in the time of the sitting of the general assembly of divines in that kingdom, that so affected the people, that there was a great and loud cry made throughout the assembly. I have also been credibly informed, and how often I cannot now say, that it was a common thing, when the famous Mr. John Rogers, of Dedham, in England, was preaching, for some of his hearers to cry out; and by what I have heard, I conclude that it was usual for many that heard that very awakening and rousing preacher of God's word, to make a great cry in the congregation."

TIMOTHY EDWARDS.

Windsor, May 5, 1742.

Mr. Flavel gives a remarkable instance of a man that he knew, that was wonderfully overcome with divine comforts; which it is supposed he knew, as the apostle Paul knew the man that was caught up to the third heaven. He relates that,

"As the person was traveling alone, with his thoughts closely fixed on the great and astonishing things of another world, his thoughts began to swell higher and higher, like the water in Ezekiel's vision, till at last they became an overflowing flood. Such was the intenseness of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys, and such his full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost all sight and sense of this world, and the concernments thereof, and

for some hours knew not where he was, nor what he was about: but having lost a great quantity of blood at the nose, he found himself so faint that it brought him a little more to himself. And after he had washed himself at a spring, and drank of the water for his refreshment, he continued to the end of his journey, which was thirty miles; and all this while was scarce sensible, and says he had several trances of considerable continuance. The same blessed frame was preserved all that night, and in a lower degree, great part of the next day: the night passed without one wink of sleep, and yet he declares he never had a sweeter night's rest in all his life. Still (adds the story) the joy of the Lord overflowed him, and he seemed to be an inhabitant of another world. And he used, for many years after, to call that day one of the days of heaven; and professed that he understood more of the life of heaven by it, than by all the books he ever read, or discourses he ever entertained about it."

There have been instances before now, of persons' crying out in transports of divine joy, in New England. We have an instance in Captain Clapp's memoirs, published by the Rev. Mr. Prince, not of a silly woman or child, but a man of solid understanding, that in a high transport of spiritual joy, was made to cry out aloud on his bed. His words, p. 9, are, "God's Holy Spirit did witness, I do believe, together with my spirit, that I was a child of God, and did fill my heart and soul with such full assurance that Christ was mine, that it did so transport me, as to make me cry out upon my bed, with a loud voice, He is come, he is come!"

There has, before now, been both crying out and falling down, in this town, under awakenings of conscience, and in the pangs of the new birth, and also in some of the neighbor towns. In one of them, more than seven years ago, was a great number together that cried out and fell down, under convictions; in most of which, by good information, was a hopeful and abiding good issue. And the Rev. Mr. Williams, of Deerfield, gave me an account of an aged man in that

town, many years before that, that being awakened by his preaching, cried out aloud in the congregation. There have been many instances in this and some neighbor towns, before now, of persons fainting with joyful discoveries made to their souls: once several together in this town. And there also formerly have been several instances here, of persons' flesh waxing cold and benumbed, and their hands clenched, yea, their bodies being set into convulsions, being overpowered with a strong sense of the astonishingly great and excellent things of God, and the eternal world.

Secondly, Another way that some err in making history and former observation their rule to judge of this work, instead of the holy scripture, is in comparing some external accidental circumstances of this work, with what has appeared sometimes in enthusiasts; and as they find an agreement in some such things, so they reject the whole work, or at least the substance of it, concluding it to be enthusiasm. So, great use has been made to this purpose of many things that are found amongst the Quakers; however totally and essentially different in its nature this work is, and the principles it is built upon, from the whole religion of the Quakers. So, to the same purpose, some external appearances that were found amongst the French prophets, and some other enthusiasts in former times, have been of late trumped up with great assurance and triumph.

4. I would propose it to be considered, whether or no some, instead of making the scriptures their only rule to judge of this work, do not make their own experience the rule, and reject such and such things as are now professed and experienced, because they never felt them themselves. Are there not many, that chiefly on this ground, have entertained and vented suspicions, if not peremptory condemnations of those extreme terrors, and those great, sudden, and extraordinary discoveries of the glorious perfections of God, and of the beauty and love of Christ; and such vehement affections, such high transports of love and joy, such pity and distress

for the souls of others, and exercises of mind that have such great effects on persons' bodies, merely, or chiefly, because they knew nothing about them by experience? Persons are very ready to be suspicious of what they have not felt themselves. It is to be feared many good men have been guilty of this error; which yet does not make it the less unreasonable. And perhaps there are some that upon this ground do not only reject these extraordinary things, but all such conviction of sin, and such discoveries of the glory of God, and excellency of Christ, and inward conviction of the truth of the gospel, by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, that are now supposed to be necessary to salvation.

These persons that thus make their own experiences their rule of judgment, instead of bowing to the wisdom of God, and yielding to his word as an infallible rule, are guilty of casting a great reflection upon the understanding of the Most High.

SECTION III.

We should not judge of the whole by a part.

Another foundation error of those that reject this work, is their not duly distinguishing the good from the bad, and very unjustly judging of the whole by a part; and so rejecting the work in general, or in the main substance of it, for the sake of some things that are accidental to it, that are evil. They look for more in men that are divinely influenced, because subject to the operations of a good spirit, than is justly to be expected from them for that reason, in this imperfect state, and dark world, where so much blindness and corruption remains in the best. When any profess to have received light, and influence, and comforts from heaven, and to have had sensible communion with God, many are ready to

expect that now they appear like angels, and not still like poor, feeble, blind, and sinful worms of the dust. There being so much corruption left in the hearts of God's own children, and its prevailing as it sometimes does, is indeed a mysterious thing, and always a stumbling-block to the world; but will not be so much wondered at by those that are well versed in, and duly mindful of, two things, viz. *First*, The word of God, which teaches us the state of true Christians in this world; and *Secondly*, their own hearts, at least if they have any grace, and have experience of its conflicts with corruption. They that are true saints are most inexcusable in making a great difficulty of a great deal of blindness, and many sinful errors in those that profess godliness. If all our conduct, both open and secret, should be known, and our hearts laid open to the world, how should we be even ready to fly from the light of the sun, and hide ourselves from the view of mankind! And what great allowances would it be found that we should need, that others should make for us! perhaps much greater than we are willing to make for others.

The great weakness of the bigger part of mankind, in any affair that is new and uncommon, appears in not distinguishing, but either approving or condemning all in the lump. They that highly approve of the affair in general, cannot bear to have any thing at all found fault with; and on the other hand, those that fasten their eyes upon some things in the affair that are amiss, and appear very disagreeable to them, at once reject the whole. Both which errors oftentimes arise from want of persons' due acquaintance with themselves. It is rash and unjust when we proceed thus in judging, either of a particular person, or a people, or of such an affair as the present wonderful influence on the minds of the people of this land. Many, if they see any thing very ill in a particular person, a minister or private professor, will at once brand him as a hypocrite. And if there be two or three of a people or society that behave themselves very irregularly, the whole must bear the blame of it. And if there

be a few, though it may be not above one in a hundred, that professed, and had a show of being the happy partakers of what are called the saving benefits of this work, that prove nought, and give the world just grounds to suspect them, the whole work must be rejected on their account; and those in general that make the like profession must be condemned for their sakes.

So careful are some persons lest this work should be defended, that now they will hardly allow that the influences of the Spirit of God on the heart, can so much as indirectly, and accidentally, be the occasion of the exercise of corruption, and commission of sin. Thus far is true, that the influence of the Spirit of God in his saving operations, will not be an occasion of the increase of the corruption of the heart in general, but on the contrary of the weakening of it: but yet there is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that at the same time that it weakens corruption in general, it may be an occasion of turning what is left into a new channel, and so of there being more of some certain kinds of the exercise of corruption than there was before; as that which tends to hinder and stop the course of a stream, if it does not do it wholly, may give a new course to so much of the water as gets by the obstacle. The influences of the Spirit, for instance, may be an occasion of new ways of the exercise of *pride*, as has been acknowledged by orthodox divines in general. That spiritual discoveries and comforts may, through the corruption of the heart, be an occasion of the exercises of spiritual pride, did not use to be doubted of, till now it is found to be needful to maintain the war against this work.

They that will hardly allow that a work of the Spirit of God can be a remote occasion of any sinful behavior or unchristian conduct, I suppose will allow that the truly gracious influences of the Spirit of God, yea and a high degree of love to God, is consistent with these two things, viz. a considerable degree of remaining corruption, and also many

errors in judgment in matters of religion, and in matters of practice. And this is all that need to be allowed, in order to its being most demonstratively evident, that a high degree of love to God may accidentally move a person to that which is very wrong, and contrary to the mind and will of God. For a high degree of love to God will strongly move a person to do that which he believes to be agreeable to God's will; and therefore, if he be mistaken, and be persuaded that that is agreeable to the will of God, which indeed is very contrary to it, then his love will accidentally, but strongly, incline him to that, which is indeed very contrary to the will of God.

They that are studied in logic have learned that the nature of the cause is not to be judged of by the nature of the effect, nor the nature of the effect from the nature of the cause, when the cause is only *causa sine qua non*, or an occasional cause; yea, that in such a case, oftentimes the nature of the effect is quite contrary to the nature of the cause.

True disciples of Christ may have a great deal of false zeal, such as the disciples had of old, when they would have fire called for from heaven to come down on the Samaritans, because they did not receive them. And even so eminently holy, and great, and divine a saint as Moses, who conversed with God from time to time, as a man speaks with his friend, and concerning whom God gives his testimony, that he *was very meek, above any man upon the face of the earth*, yet may be rash and sinful in his zeal, when his spirit is stirred by the hard-heartedness and opposition of others, so as to speak very unadvisedly with his lips, and greatly to offend God, and shut himself out from the possession of the good things that God is about to accomplish for his church on earth; as Moses was excluded Canaan, though he had brought the people out of Egypt, Psalm cvi. 32, 33. And men, even in those very things wherein they are influenced by a truly pious principle, yet, through error and want of due consideration and caution, may be very rash with their

zeal. It was a truly good spirit that animated that excellent generation of Israel that was in Joshua's time, in that affair that we have an account of in the twenty-second chapter of Joshua; and yet they were rash and heady with their zeal, to go about to gather all Israel together to go up so furiously to war with their brethren of the two tribes and half, about their building the altar Ed, without first inquiring into the matter, or so much as sending a messenger to be informed. So the Christians that were of the circumcision, with warmth and contention condemned Peter for receiving Cornelius, as we have account, Acts xi. This their heat and censure was unjust, and Peter was wronged in it; but there is all appearance in the story that they acted from a real zeal and concern for the will and honor of God. So the primitive Christians, from their zeal for and against unclean meats, censured and condemned one another: this was a bad effect, and yet the apostle bears them witness, or at least expresses his charity towards them, that both sides acted from a good principle, and true respect to the Lord, Rom. xiv. 6. The zeal of the Corinthians with respect to the incestuous man, though the apostle highly commends it, yet he at the same time saw that they needed a caution, lest they should carry it too far, to an undue severity, and so as to fail of Christian meekness and forgiveness, 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and chap. vii. 11. to the end. Luther, that great reformer, had a great deal of bitterness with his zeal.

It surely cannot be wondered at by considerate persons, that at a time when multitudes all over the land have their affections greatly moved, great numbers should run into many errors and mistakes with respect to their duty, and consequently into many acts and practices that are imprudent and irregular. I question whether there be a man in New England, of the strongest reason and greatest learning, but what would be put to it to keep master of himself, thoroughly to weigh his words, and consider all the consequences of his behavior, so as to behave himself in all re-

spects prudently, if he were so strongly impressed with a sense of divine and eternal things, and his affections so exceedingly moved, as has been frequent of late among the common people. How little do they consider human nature who look upon it so insuperable a stumbling-block when such multitudes of all kinds of capacities, natural tempers, educations, customs, and manners of life, are so greatly and variously affected, that imprudencies and irregularities of conduct should abound ; especially in a state of things so uncommon,and when the degree, extent, swiftness, and power of the operation is so very extraordinary, and so new, that there has not been time and experience enough to give birth to rules for peoples' conduct, and so unusual in times past, that the writings of divines do not afford rules to direct us in such a state of things.

A great deal of noise and tumult, confusion and uproar, and darkness mixed with light, and evil with good, is always to be expected in the beginning of something very extraordinary, and very glorious in the state of things in human society, or the church of God. As after nature has long been shut up in a cold, dead state in time of winter, when the sun returns in the spring, there is, together with the increase of the light and heat of the sun, very dirty and tempestuous weather, before all is settled calm and serene, and all nature rejoices in its bloom and beauty. It is in the new creation, as it was in the old, the Spirit of God first moved upon the face of the waters, which was an occasion of great uproar and tumult, and things were gradually brought to a settled state, till at length all stood forth in that beautiful, peaceful order, when the heavens and the earth were finished, and God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. When God is about to bring to pass something great and glorious in the world, nature is in a ferment and struggle, and the world as it were in travail. As when God was about to introduce the Messiah into the world, and that new and glorious dispensation that he

set up, he *shook the heavens and the earth, and shook all nations.* There is nothing that the church of God is in scripture more frequently represented by than vegetables; as a tree, a vine, corn, &c., which gradually bring forth their fruit, and are first green before they are ripe. A great revival of religion is expressly compared to this gradual production of vegetables, Isa. lxi. 11. "As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." The church is in a special manner compared to a palm-tree, Cant. vii. 7, 8. Exod. xv. 27. 1 Kings vi. 29. Psalm xcii. 12. Of which tree this peculiar thing is observed, that the fruit of it, though it be very sweet and good when it is ripe, yet, before it has had time to ripen, has a mixture of poison.

The weakness of human nature has always appeared in times of great revival of religion, by a disposition to run to extremes and get into confusion; and especially in these three things, enthusiasm, superstition, and intemperate zeal. So it appeared in the time of the reformation very remarkably; and also in the days of the apostles; many were then exceedingly disposed to lay weight on those things that were very notional and chimerical, giving heed to fables and whimsies, as appears by 1 Tim. i. 4. and iv. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 16. and v. 23. and Tit. i. 14. and iii. 9. Many, as ecclesiastical history informs us, fell off into the most wild enthusiasm, and extravagant notions of spirituality, and extraordinary illumination from heaven beyond others: and many were prone to superstition, will-worship, and a voluntary humility, giving heed to the commandments of men, being fond of an unprofitable bodily exercise, as appears by many passages in the apostles' writings: and what a proneness then appeared among professors to swerve from the path of duty, and the spirit of the gospel, in the exercises of a rash indiscreet zeal, censuring and condemning ministers and people; one saying, I am of Paul, another, I of Apollos, another, I of Cephas; judging one another for

differences of opinion about smaller matters, unclean meats, holy days, and holy places, and their different opinions and practices respecting civil intercourse and communication with their heathen neighbors! And how much did vain jangling and disputing and confusion prevail through undue heat of spirit, under the name of a religious zeal! 2 Tim. vi. 4, 5. 2 Tim. ii. 16. and Tit. iii. 9. And what a task had the apostles to keep them within bounds, and maintain good order in the churches! How often are they mentioning their irregularities! The prevailing of such like disorders seems to have been the special occasion of writing many of their epistles. The church, in that great effusion of the Spirit that was then, and the strong impressions that God's people were then under, was under the care of infallible guides, that watched over them day and night; but yet so prone were they, through the weakness and corruption of human nature to get out of the way, that irregularity and confusion rose in some churches, where there was an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit to a very great height, even in the apostles' lifetime, and under their eye. And though some of the apostles lived long to settle the state of things, yet presently after they were dead, the Christian church ran into many superstitions and childish notions and practices, and in some respects into a great severity in their zeal. And let any wise person that has not, in the midst of the disputes of the present day, got beyond the calmness of consideration, impartially consider to what lengths we may reasonably suppose many of the primitive Christians, in their heat of zeal, and under their extraordinary impressions, would soon have gone, if they had had no inspired guides; and whether or no it is not probable that the church of Corinth in particular, by an increase of their irregularities and contentions, would not in a little time have broke to pieces, and dissolved in a state of the utmost confusion: and yet this would have been no evidence that there had not been a most glorious and remarkable outpouring of the Spirit in that city. But as for

us, we have no infallible apostle to guide and direct us, to rectify disorders, and reclaim us when we are wandering; but every one does what is right in his own eyes; and they that err in judgment, and are got into a wrong path, continue to wander, till experience of the mischievous issue convinces them of their error.

If we look over this affair, and seriously weigh it in its circumstances, it will appear a matter of no great difficulty to account for the errors that have been gone into, supposing the work in general to be from a very great outpouring of the Spirit of God. It may easily be accounted for, that many have run into great errors, and into just such errors as they they have. It is known, that some that have been improved as great instruments to promote this work, have been very young; and how natural is it for such as are themselves newly awaked out of sleep, and brought out of that state of darkness, insensibility, and spiritual death, which they had been in ever since they were born; and have a new and wonderful scene opened to them; and have in view the reality, the vastness, and infinite importance, and nearness of spiritual and eternal things; and at the same time are surprised to see the world asleep about them; and have not the advantage of age and experience, and have had but little opportunity to study divinity, or to converse with aged experienced Christians and divines; I say, how natural is it for such to fall into many errors with respect to the state of mankind, with which they are so surprised, and with respect to the means and methods of their relief? Is it any wonder that they have not at once learned how to make all the allowances that are to be made, and that they do not at once find out that method of dealing with the world, that is adapted to the mysterious state and nature of mankind? Is it any wonder, that they cannot at once foresee what the consequences of things will be, what evils are to be guarded against, and what difficulties are like to arise, that are to be provided for?

We have long been in a strange stupor; the influences of the Spirit of God upon the heart have been but little felt, and the nature of them but little taught; so that they are in many respects new to great numbers of those that have lately fallen under them. And is it any wonder that they that never before had experience of the supernatural influence of the Divine Spirit upon their souls, and never were instructed in the nature of these influences, do not so well know how to distinguish one extraordinary new impression from another, and so (to themselves insensibly) run into enthusiasm, taking every strong impulse or impression to be divine? How natural is it to suppose, that among the multitudes of illiterate people (most of which are in their youth) that find themselves so wonderfully changed, and brought into such new, and before (to them) almost unheard of circumstances, that many should pass wrong, and very strange judgments of both persons and things that are about them; and that now they behold them in such a new light, they in their surprise should go further from the judgment that they were wont to make of them than they ought, and in their great change of sentiments should pass from one extreme to another? And why should it be thought strange, that those that scarce ever heard of any such thing as an outpouring of the Spirit of God before; or if they did, had no notion of it; do not know how to behave themselves in such a new and strange state of things? And is it any wonder that they are ready to hearken to those that have instructed them, that have been the means of delivering them from such a state of death and misery as they were in before, or have a name for being the happy instruments of promoting the same work among others? Is it unaccountable that persons in these circumstances are ready to receive every thing they say, and to drink down error as well as truth from them? And why should there be all indignation and no compassion towards those that are thus misled?

When these persons are extraordinarily affected with a new sense, and recent discovery they have received, of the greatness and excellency of the Divine Being, the certainty and infinite importance of eternal things, the preciousness of souls, and the dreadful danger and madness of mankind, together with a great sense of God's distinguishing kindness and love to them; no wonder that now they think they must exert themselves, and do something extraordinary for the honor of God and the good of the souls of their fellow-creatures, and know not how to sit still, and forbear speaking and acting with uncommon earnestness and vigor. And in these circumstances, if they be not persons of more than common steadiness and discretion, or have not some person of wisdom to direct them, it is a wonder if they do not proceed without due caution, and do things that are irregular, and that will, in the issue, do much more hurt than good.

Censuring others is the worst disease with which this affair has been attended: but yet such a time as this is indeed a time of great temptation to this sinful error. When there has been such a time of great and long continued deadness, and many are brought out of a state of nature, into a state of grace, in so extraordinary a manner, and filled with such uncommon degrees of light, it is natural for such to form their notions of a state of grace wholly from what they experience; many of them know no other way; for they never have been taught much about a state of grace, and the different degrees of grace, and the degrees of darkness and corruption that grace is consistent with, nor concerning the manner of the influences of the Spirit in converting a soul, and the variety of the manner of his operations: they therefore forming their idea of a state of grace only by their own experience, no wonder that it appears an insuperable difficulty to them to reconcile such a state, of which they have this idea, with what they observe in professors that are about them. It is indeed in itself a very great mystery, that grace should be consistent with so much and such kind of corruption as sometimes pre-

vails in the truly godly; and no wonder that it especially appears so to uninstructed new converts, that have been converted in an extraordinary manner.

Though censoriousness be a thing that is very sinful, and is most commonly found in hypocrites and persons of a pharasaical spirit, yet it is not so inconsistent with true godliness as some imagine. We have remarkable instances of it in those holy men that we have an account of in the book of Job: not only were Job's three friends, that seem to have been eminently holy men, guilty of it, in very unreasonably censuring the best man on earth, very positively determining that he was an unconverted man; but Job himself, that was not only a man of true piety, but excelled all men in piety, and particularly excelled in a humble, meek, and patient spirit, was guilty of bitterly censuring his three friends, as wicked, vile hypocrites. Job xvi. 9, 10, 11. "He teareth me in his wrath who hateth me, he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me: they have gaped upon me with their mouth. God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked." So he is very positive in it that they are hypocrites, and shall be miserably destroyed as such, in the next chapter, v. 2, 3, 4. "Are there not mockers with me? And doth not mine eye continue in their provocation? Lay down now, put me in surety with thee, who is he that will strike hands with me? For thou hast hid their heart from understanding, therefore shalt thou not exalt them." And again, v. 8, 9, 10. "Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite: The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger. But as for you all, do you return and come now, for I cannot find one wise man (i. e. one good man) among you."

Thus I think the errors and irregularities that attend this work, may be accounted for, from the consideration of the infirmity and weakness and common corruption of mankind,

together with the circumstances of the work, though we should suppose it to be the work of God. And it would not be a just objection in any to say, if these powerful impressions and great affections are from the Spirit of God, why does not the same Spirit give strength of understanding and capacity in proportion, to those persons that are the subjects of them; so that strong affections may not, through their error, drive them to an irregular and sinful conduct? For I do not know that God has any where obliged himself to do it. The end of the influences of God's Spirit is to make men spiritually knowing, wise to salvation, which is the most excellent wisdom; and he has also appointed means for our gaining such degrees of other knowledge as we need, to conduct ourselves regularly, which means should be carefully used: But the end of the influence of the Spirit of God is not to increase men's natural capacities, nor has God obliged himself immediately to increase civil prudence in proportion to the degrees of spiritual light.

If we consider the errors that attend this work, not only as from man, and his infirmity, but also as from God, and by his permission and disposal, they are not strange, upon the supposition of its being, as to the substance of it, a work of God. If God intends this great revival of religion to be the dawning, or a forerunner of a happy state of his church on earth, it may be an instance of the divine wisdom, in the beginning of it, to suffer so many irregularities and errors in conduct, to which he knew men, in their present weak state, were most exposed, under great religious affections, and when animated with great zeal. For it will be very likely to be of excellent benefit to his church, in the continuance and progress of the work afterwards: Their experience in the first setting out, of the mischievous consequences of these errors, and smarting for them in the beginning, may be a happy defense to them afterwards, for many generations, from these errors, which otherwise they might continually be exposed to. As when David and all Israel went about to bring back the

ark into the midst of the land, after it had been long absent, first in the land of the Philistines, and then in Kirjathjearim, in the utmost borders of the land; they at first sought not the Lord after the due order, and they smarted for their error; but this put them upon studying the law, and more thoroughly acquainting themselves with the mind and will of God, and seeking and serving him with great circumspection; and the consequence was glorious, viz. their seeking God in such a manner as was accepted of him; and the ark of God's ascending into the heights of Zion, with those great and extraordinary rejoicings of the king and all the people, without any frown or rebuke from God intermixed; and God's dwelling thenceforward in the midst of the people, to those glorious purposes that are expressed in the 68th psalm.

And it is very analogous to the manner of God's dealing with his people, to permit a great deal of error, and suffer the infirmity of his people much to appear, in the beginning of a glorious work of his grace for their felicity, to teach them what they be, to humble them, and fit them for that glorious prosperity he is about to advance them to, and the more to secure to himself the honor of such a glorious work: for by man's exceeding weakness appearing in the beginning of it, it is evident that God does not lay the foundation of it in man's strength or wisdom.

And as we need not wonder at the errors that attend this work, if we look at the hand of men that are guilty of them, and the hand of God in permitting them, so neither shall we see cause to wonder at them, if we consider them with regard to the hand that Satan has in them. For as the work is much greater than any other outpouring of the Spirit that ever has been in New England, so no wonder that the devil is more alarmed and enraged, and exerts himself more vigorously against it, and does more powerfully endeavor to tempt and mislead those that are the subjects of it, or are its promoters.

SECTION V.

The nature of the work in general.

Whatever imprudences there have been, and whatever sinful irregularities ; whatever vehemence of the passions, and heats of the imagination, transports and ecstasies ; and whatever error in judgment, and indiscreet zeal ; and whatever outcries, and faintings, and agitations of body ; yet it is manifest and notorious, that there has been of late a very uncommon influence upon the minds of a very great part of the inhabitants of New England, from one end of the land to the other, that has been attended with the following effects, viz. a great increase of a spirit of seriousness and sober consideration of the things of the eternal world ; a disposition to hearken to any thing that is said of things of this nature, with attention and affection ; a disposition to treat matters of religion with solemnity, and as matters of great importance ; a disposition to make these things the subject of conversation ; and a great disposition to hear the word of God preached, and to take all opportunities in order to it ; and to attend on the public worship of God, and all external duties of religion in a more solemn and decent manner ; so that there is a remarkable and general alteration in the face of New England in these respects : multitudes in all parts of the land, of vain, thoughtless, regardless persons, are quite changed, and become serious and considerate. There is a vast increase of concern for the salvation of the precious soul, and of that inquiry, what shall I do to be saved ? The hearts of multitudes have been greatly taken off from the things of the world, its profits, pleasures, and honors, and there has been a great increase of sensibleness and tenderness of conscience : multitudes in all parts have had their consciences awakened, and have been made sensible of the

pernicious nature and consequences of sin, and what a dreadful thing it is to lie under guilt and the displeasure of God, and to live without peace and reconciliation with him. They have also been awakened to a sense of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the reality of another world and future judgment, and of the necessity of an interest in Christ: they are more afraid of sin, more careful and inquisitive that they may know what is contrary to the mind and will of God, that they may avoid it, and what he requires of them, that they may do it; more careful to guard against temptations, more watchful over their own hearts, earnestly desirous of being informed what are the means that God has directed to for their salvation, and diligent in the use of the means that God has appointed in his word, in order to it. Many very stupid, senseless sinners, and persons of a vain mind, have been greatly awakened. There is a strange alteration almost all over New England amongst young people: by a powerful, invisible influence on their minds, they have been brought to forsake those things in a general way, as it were, at once, that they were extremely fond of, and greatly addicted to, and that they seemed to place the happiness of their lives in, and that nothing before could induce them to forsake: as their frolicking, vain company keeping, night walking, their mirth and jollity, their impure language, and lewd songs: in vain did ministers preach against those things before, and in vain were laws made to restrain them, and in vain was all the vigilance of magistrates and civil officers; but now they have almost every where dropped them, as it were, of themselves. And there is a great alteration amongst old and young as to drinking, tavern haunting, profane speaking, and extravagance in apparel. Many notoriously vicious persons have been reformed, and become externally quite new creatures: some that are wealthy, and of a fashionable, gay education; some great beaux and fine ladies, that seemed to have their minds swallowed up with nothing but the vain shows and pleasures of the world, have

been wonderfully altered, and have relinquished these vanities, and are becomes erious, mortified, and humble in their conversation. It is astonishing to see the alteration that is in some towns, where before was but little appearance of religion, or any thing but vice and vanity: and so remote was all that was to be seen or heard amongst them from any thing that favored of vital piety or serious religion, or that had any relation to it, that one would have thought, if they had judged only by what appeared in them, that they had been some other species from the serious and religious, which had no concern with another world, and whose natures were not made capable of those things that appertain to Christian experience, and pious conversation; especially was it thus among young persons: and now they are transformed into another sort of people; their former vain, worldly, and vicious conversation and dispositions seem to be forsaken, and they are, as it were, gone over to a new world: their thoughts, and their talk, and their concern, affections and inquiries, are now about the favor of God, an interest in Christ, a renewed, sanctified heart, and a spiritual blessedness, and acceptance and happiness in a future world. And through the greater part of New England, the Holy Bible is in much greater esteem and use than it used to be; the great things that are contained in it are much more regarded, as things of the greatest consequence, and are much more the subjects of meditation and conversation; and other books of piety that have long been of established reputation, as the most excellent and most tending to promote true godliness, have been abundantly more in use; the Lord's day is more religiously and strictly observed; and abundance has been lately done at making up differences, and confessing faults one to another, and making restitution; probably more within these two years, than was done in thirty years before: it has been so undoubtedly in many places. And surprising has been the power of that Spirit that has been poured out on the land, in many instances, to destroy old grudges, and

make up long continued breaches, and to bring those that seemed to be in a confirmed irreconcilable alienation, to embrace each other in a sincere and entire amity. Great numbers under this influence have been brought to a deep sense of their own sinfulness and vileness ; the sinfulness of their lives, the heinousness of their disregard of the authority of the great God, and the heinousness of their living in contempt of a Savior : they have lamented their former negligence of their souls, and neglecting and losing precious time. Their sins of life have been extraordinarily set before them ; and they have also had a great sense of their sins of heart ; their hardness of heart, and enmity against that which is good, and proneness to all evil ; and also of the worthlessness of their own religious performances, how unworthy their prayers, praises, and all that they did in religion, was to be regarded of God : and it has been a common thing that persons have had such a sense of their own sinfulness, that they have thought themselves to be the worst of all, and that none ever was so vile as they : and many seem to have been greatly convinced that they were utterly unworthy of any mercy at the hands of God, however miserable they were, and though they stood in extreme necessity of mercy, and that they deserved nothing but eternal burnings ; and have been sensible that God would be altogether just and righteous in inflicting endless damnation upon them, at the same time that they have had an exceeding affecting sense of the dreadfulness of such endless torments, and have apprehended themselves to be greatly in danger of it. And many have been deeply affected with a sense of their own ignorance and blindness, and exceeding helplessness, and so of their extreme need of the divine pity and help. And so far as we are worthy to be credited one by another, in what we say, (and persons of good understanding and sound mind, and known and experienced probity, have a right to be believed by their neighbors when they speak of things that fall under their observation and experience,) multitudes in

New England have lately been brought to a new and great conviction of the truth and certainty of the things of the gospel; to a firm persuasion that Christ Jesus is the Son of God, and the great and only Savior of the world; and that the great doctrines of the gospel touching reconciliation by his blood, and acceptance in his righteousness, and eternal life and salvation through him, are matters of undoubted truth, together with a most affecting sense of the excellency and sufficiency of this Savior, and the glorious wisdom and grace of God shining in this way of salvation; and of the wonders of Christ's dying love, and the sincerity of Christ in the invitations of the gospel, and a consequent affiance and sweet rest of soul in Christ, as a glorious Savior, a strong rock and high tower, accompanied with an admiring and exalting apprehension of the glory of the divine perfections, God's majesty, holiness, sovereign grace, &c.; with a sensible, strong, and sweet love to God, and delight in him, far surpassing all temporal delights, or earthly pleasures; and a rest of soul in him as a portion and the fountain of all good, attended with an abhorrence of sin, and self-loathing for it, and earnest longings of soul after more holiness and conformity to God, with a sense of the great need of God's help in order to holiness of life; together with a most dear love to all that are supposed to be the children of God, and a love to mankind in general, and a most sensible and tender compassion for the souls of sinners, and earnest desires of the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. And these things have appeared to be in many of them abiding now for many months, yea, more than a year and half; with an abiding concern to live a holy life, and great complaints of remaining corruption, longing to be more free from the body of sin and death. And not only do these effects appear in new converts, but great numbers of those that were formerly esteemed the most sober and pious people, have, under the influence of this work, been greatly quickened, and their hearts renewed with greater degrees of light, re-

newed repentance and humiliation, and more lively exercises of faith, love, and joy in the Lord. Many, as I am well knowing, have of late been remarkably engaged to watch, and strive, and fight against sin, and cast out every idol, and sell all for Christ, and give up themselves entirely to God, and make a sacrifice of every worldly and carnal thing to the welfare and prosperity of their souls. And there has of late appeared in some places an unusual disposition to bind themselves to it in a solemn covenant with God. And now instead of meeting at taverns and drinking houses, and meetings of young people in frolics and vain company, the country is full of meetings of all sorts and ages of persons, young and old, men, women, and little children, to read and pray, and sing praises, and to converse of the things of God and another world. In very many places the main of the conversation in all companies turns on religion, and things of a spiritual nature. Instead of vain mirth amongst young people, there is now either mourning under a sense of the guilt of sin, or holy rejoicing in Christ Jesus ; and instead of their lewd songs, are now to be heard from them songs of praise to God, and the Lamb that was slain to redeem them by his blood. And there has been this alteration abiding on multitudes all over the land, for a year and half, without any appearance of a disposition to return to former vice and vanity. And under the influences of this work, there have been many of the remains of those wretched people and dregs of mankind, the poor Indians, that seemed to be next to a state of brutality, and with whom, till now, it seemed to be to little more purpose to use endeavors for their instruction and awakening, than with the beasts ; whose minds have now been strangely opened to receive instruction, and have been deeply affected with the concerns of their precious souls, and have reformed their lives and forsaken their former stupid, barbarous, and brutish way of living—and particularly that sin to which they have been so exceedingly addicted, their drunkenness—and are become devout and

serious persons; and many of them to appearance brought truly and greatly to delight in the things of God, and to have their souls very much engaged and entertained with the great things of the gospel. And many of the poor negroes also have been in like manner wrought upon and changed. And the souls of very many little children have been remarkably enlightened, and their hearts wonderfully affected and enlarged, and their mouths opened, expressing themselves in a manner far beyond their years, and to the just astonishment of those that have heard them; and some of them from time to time, for many months, greatly and delightfully affected with the glory of divine things, and the excellency and love of the Redeemer, with their hearts greatly filled with love to and joy in him, and have continued to be serious and pious in their behavior.

The divine power of this work has marvelously appeared in some instances I have been acquainted with, in supporting and fortifying the heart under great trials, such as the death of children, and extreme pain of body; wonderfully maintaining the serenity, calmness, and joy of the soul, in an immovable rest in God, and sweet resignation to him. There also have been instances of some that have been the subjects of this work, that under the blessed influences of it have, in such a calm, bright, and joyful frame of mind, been carried through the valley of the shadow of death.

And now let us consider: is it not strange that in a Christian, orthodox country, and such a land of light as this is, there should be many at a loss whose work this is, whether the work of God, or the work of the devil? Is it not a shame to New England that such a work should be much doubted of here? Need we look over the histories of all past times, to see if there be not some circumstances and external appearances that attend this work, that have been formerly found amongst enthusiasts? Whether the Montanists had not great transports of joy, and whether the French prophets had not agitations of body? Blessed be God! He does not put us to the toil of such inquiries. We need not say, Who

shall ascend into heaven, to bring us down something whereby to judge of this work? Nor does God send us beyond the seas, nor into the past ages, to obtain a rule that shall determine and satisfy us. But we have a rule near at hand, a sacred book that God himself has put into our hands, with clear and infallible marks, sufficient to resolve us in things of this nature; which book I think we must reject, not only in some particular passages, but in the substance of it, if we reject such a work as has now been described, as not being the work of God. The whole tenor of the gospel proves it; all the notion of religion that the scripture gives us confirms it.

I suppose there is scarcely a minister in this land, but from sabbath to sabbath used to pray that God would pour out his Spirit, and work a reformation and revival of religion in the country, and turn us from our intemperance, profaneness, uncleanness, worldliness, and other sins; and we have kept, from year to year, days of public fasting and prayer to God, to acknowledge our backslidings, and humble ourselves for our sins, and to seek of God forgiveness and reformation: and now when so great and extensive a reformation is so suddenly and wonderfully accomplished, in those very things that we have sought to God for, shall we not acknowledge it? Or when we do, do it with great coldness, caution, and reserve, and scarcely take any notice of it in our public prayers and praises, or mention it but slightly and cursorily, and in such a manner as carries an appearance as though we would contrive to say as little of it as ever we could, and were glad to pass from it? And that because (although indeed there be such a work attended with all these glorious effects, yet) the work is attended with a mixture of error, imprudencies, darkness, and sin; because some persons are carried away with impressions, and are indiscreet, and too censorious with their zeal; and because there are high transports of religious affection; and because of some effects on persons' bodies that we do not understand the reason of?

SECTION V.

The nature of the work in a particular instance.

I have been particularly acquainted with many persons that have been the subjects of the high and extraordinary transports of the present day; and in the highest transports of any of the instances that I have been acquainted with, and where the affections of admiration, love, and joy, so far as another could judge, have been raised to a higher pitch than in any other instances I have observed or been informed of, the following things have been united, viz. a very frequent dwelling, for some considerable time together, in such views of the glory of the divine perfections, and Christ's excellencies, that the soul in the mean time has been as it were perfectly overwhelmed, and swallowed up with light and love and a sweet solace, rest and joy of soul, that was altogether unspeakable; and more than once continuing for five or six hours together, without interruption, in that clear and lively view or sense of the infinite beauty and amiableness of Christ's person, and the heavenly sweetness of his excellent and transcendent love; so that (to use the person's own expressions) the soul remained in a kind of heavenly elysium, and did as it were swim in the rays of Christ's love, like a little mote swimming in the beams of the sun, or streams of his light that come in at a window; and the heart was swallowed up in a kind of glow of Christ's love, coming down from Christ's heart in heaven as a constant stream of sweet light, at the same time the soul all flowing out in love to him; so that there seemed to be a constant flowing and reflowing from heart to heart: the soul dwelt on high, and was lost in God, and seemed almost to leave the body; dwelling in a pure delight that fed and satisfied the soul; enjoying pleasure without the least sting, or any

interruption: a sweetness that the soul was lost in; so that (so far as the judgment and word of a person of discretion may be taken, speaking upon the most deliberate consideration) what was enjoyed in each single minute of the whole space, which was many hours, was undoubtedly worth more than all the outward comfort and pleasure of the whole life put together; and this without being in any trance, or being at all deprived of the exercise of the bodily senses: and the like heavenly delight and unspeakable joy of soul, enjoyed from time to time, for years together; though not frequently so long together, to such a height: extraordinary views of divine things, and religious affections, being frequently attended with very great effects on the body, nature often sinking under the weight of divine discoveries, the strength of the body taken away, so as to deprive of all ability to stand or speak; sometimes the hands clenched, and the flesh cold, but senses still remaining; animal nature often in a great emotion and agitation, and the soul very often, of late, so overcome with great admiration, and a kind of omnipotent joy, as to cause the person (wholly unavoidably) to leap with all the might, with joy and mighty exultation of soul; the soul at the same time being so strongly drawn towards God and Christ in heaven, that it seemed to the person as though soul and body would, as it were of themselves, of necessity mount up, leave the earth and ascend thither. These effects on the body did not begin now in this wonderful season, that they should be owing to the influence of the example of the times, but about seven years ago; and began in a much higher degree, and greater frequency, near three years ago, when there was no such enthusiastical season, as many account this, but it was a very dead time through the land: they arose from no distemper catched from Mr. Whitefield or Mr. Tennent, because they began before either of them came into the country: they began, as I said, near three years ago, in a great increase, upon an extraordinary self-dedication, and renunciation of the world and resignation of all to God, made in a great view of God's

excellency, and high exercise of love to him, and rest and joy in him; since which time they have been very frequent; and began in a yet higher degree, and greater frequency, about a year and a half ago, upon another new resignation of all to God, with a yet greater fervency and delight of soul; since which time the body has been very often fainting, with the love of Christ; and began in a much higher degree still, the last winter, upon another resignation and acceptance of God, as the only portion and happiness of the soul, wherein the whole world, with the dearest enjoyments in it, were renounced as dirt and dung, and all that is pleasant and glorious, and all that is terrible in this world, seemed perfectly to vanish into nothing, and nothing to be left but God, in whom the soul was perfectly swallowed up, as in an infinite ocean of blessedness: since which time there have often been great agitations of body, and an unavoidable leaping for joy; and the soul as it were dwelling almost without interruption, in a kind of paradise; and very often, in high transports, disposed to speak of those great and glorious things of God and Christ, and the eternal world, that are in view, to others that are present, in a most earnest manner, and with a loud voice, so that it is next to impossible to avoid it: these effects on the body not arising from any bodily distemper or weakness, because the greatest of all have been in a good state of health. This great rejoicing has been a rejoicing with trembling, i. e. attended with a deep and lively sense of the greatness and majesty of God, and the person's own exceeding littleness and vileness. Spiritual joys in this person never were attended, either formerly or lately, with the least appearance of any laughter or lightness of countenance, or manner of speaking; but with a peculiar abhorrence of such appearances in spiritual rejoicings, especially since joys have been greatest of all: these high transports, when they have been past, have had abiding effects in the increase of the sweetness, rest, and humility that they have left upon the soul; and a new engagedness of heart to live to God's

honor, and watch and fight against sin. And these things not in one that is in the giddy age of youth, nor in a new convert, and unexperienced Christian, but in one that was converted above twenty-seven years ago; and neither converted, nor educated in that enthusiastical town of Northampton (as some may be ready to call it) but in a town and family that none that I know of suspected of enthusiasm; and in a Christian that has been long, and in an uncommon manner, growing in grace, and rising, by very sensible degrees, to higher love to God, and weanedness from the world, and mastery over sin and temptation, through great trials and conflicts, and long continued struggling and fighting with sin, and earnest and constant prayer and labor in religion, and engagedness of mind in the use of all means, attended with a great exactness of life: which growth has been attended, not only with a great increase of religious affections, but with a wonderful alteration of outward behavior, in many things, visible to those who are most intimately acquainted, so as lately to have become as it were a new person: and particularly in living so much more above the world, and in a greater degree of steadfastness and strength in the way of duty, and self-denial, maintaining the Christian conflict against temptation, and conquering from time to time under great trials; persisting in an unmoved, untouched calm and rest, under the changes and accidents of time. The person had formerly in lower degrees of grace, been subject to unsteadiness, and many ups and downs, in the frame of mind: the mind being under great disadvantages, through a vapory habit of body, and often subject to melancholy, and at times almost overborne with it, it having been so even from early youth; but strength of grace, and divine light, has, of a long time, wholly conquered these disadvantages, and carried the mind in a constant manner, quite above all such effects of vapors. Since that resignation spoken of before, made near three years ago, every thing of that nature seems to be overcome and crushed by the power

of faith and trust in God, and resignation to him; the person has remained in a constant, uninterrupted rest, and humble joy in God, and assurance of his favor, without one hour's melancholy or darkness, from that day to this; vapors have had great effects on the body, such as they used to have before, but the soul has been always out of their reach. And this steadfastness and constancy has remained through great outward changes and trials; such as times of the most extreme pain, and apparent hazard of immediate death. What has been felt in late great transports is known to be nothing new in kind, but to be of the same nature with what was felt formerly, when a little child of about five or six years of age; but only in a vastly higher degree. These transporting views and rapturous affections are not attended with any enthusiastic disposition to follow impulses, or any supposed prophetical revelations; nor have they been observed to be attended with any appearance of spiritual pride, but very much of a contrary disposition, an increase of a spirit of humility and meekness, and a disposition in honor to prefer others. And it is worthy to be remarked, that at a time remarkably distinguished from all others, wherein discoveries and holy affections were evidently at the greastest height that ever happened, the greatness and clearness of divine light being overwhelming, and the strength and sweetness of divine love altogether overpowering, which began early in the morning of the holy sabbath, and lasted for days together, melting all down in the deepest humility and poverty of spirit, reverence, and resignation, and the sweetest meekness and universal benevolence; I say, it is worthy to be observed, that there were these two things in a remarkable manner felt at that time, viz. a peculiar sensible aversion to judging others that were professing Christians of good standing in the visible church that they were not converted, or with respect to their degrees of grace; or at all intermeddling with that matter, so much as to determine against and condemn others in the thought of the heart; it appearing hateful, as not agreeing with that lamb-like humility, meekness, gentleness,

and charity, which the soul then, above other times, saw the beauty of, and felt a disposition to. The disposition that was then felt was, on the contrary, to prefer others to self, and to hope that they saw more of God and loved him better: though before, under smaller discoveries, and feebler exercises of divine affections, there had been felt a disposition to censure and condemn others. And another thing that was felt at that time, was a very great sense of the importance of moral, social duties, and how great a part of religion lay in them: there was such a new sense and conviction of this, beyond what had been before, that it seemed to be as it were a clear discovery then made to the soul: but in general there has been a very great increase of a sense of these two things, as divine views and divine love have increased.

The things already mentioned have been attended also with the following things, viz. an extraordinary sense of the awful majesty and greatness of God, so as oftentimes to take away the bodily strength; a sense of the holiness of God, as of a flame infinitely pure and bright, so as sometimes to overwhelm soul and body; a sense of the piercing all-seeing eye of God, so as sometimes to take away the bodily strength; and an extraordinary view of the infinite terribleness of the wrath of God, which has very frequently been strongly impressed on the mind, together with a sense of the ineffable misery of sinners that are exposed to this wrath, that has been overbearing: sometimes the exceeding pollution of the person's own heart, as a sink of all manner of abomination, and a nest of vipers, and the dreadfulness of an eternal hell of God's wrath, opened to view both together; with a clear view of a desert of that misery, without the least degree of divine pity, and that by the pollution of the best duties; yea, only by the pollution and irreverence, and want of humility that attended once speaking of the holy name of God, when done in the best manner that ever it was done; the strength of the body very often taken away with a deep mourning for sin, as committed against so holy and good a

God, sometimes with an affecting sense of actual sin, sometimes especially indwelling sin, sometimes the consideration of the sin of the heart as appearing in a particular thing, as for instance, in that there was no greater forwardness and readiness to self-denial for God and Christ, that had so denied himself for us; yea, sometimes the consideration of sin that was in only speaking one word concerning the infinitely great and holy God, has been so affecting as to overcome the strength of nature: a very great sense of the certain truth of the great things revealed in the gospel; an overwhelming sense of the glory of the work of redemption, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ; the glorious harmony of the divine attributes appearing therein, as that wherein mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other; a sight of the fullness and glorious sufficiency of Christ, that has been so affecting as to overcome the body: a constant immovable trust in God through Christ, with a great sense of his strength and faithfulness, the sureness of his covenant, and the immutability of his promises, so that the everlasting mountains and perpetual hills have appeared as mere shadows to these things: sometimes the sufficiency and faithfulness of God as the covenant God of his people, appearing in these words, I AM THAT I AM, in so affecting a manner as to overcome the body: a sense of the glorious, unsearchable, unerring wisdom of God in his works, both of creation and providence, so as to swallow up the soul, and overcome the strength of the body: a sweet rejoicing of soul at the thoughts of God's being infinitely and unchangeably happy, and an exulting gladness of heart that God is self-sufficient, and infinitely above all dependence, and reigns over all, and does his will with absolute and uncontrollable power and sovereignty; a sense of the glory of the Holy Spirit, as the great Comforter, so as to overwhelm both soul and body; only mentioning the word *Comforter*, has immediately taken away all strength; that word, as the person expressed it, seemed great enough to fill

heaven and earth : a most vehement and passionate desire of the honor and glory of God's name ; a sensible, clear, and constant preference of it not only to the person's own temporal interest, but spiritual comfort in this world ; and a willingness to suffer the hidings of God's face, and to live and die in darkness and horror if God's honor should require it, and to have no other reward for it but that God's name should be glorified, although so much of the sweetness of the light of God's countenance had been experienced : a great lamenting of ingratitude, and the lowness of the degree of love to God, so as to deprive of bodily strength ; and very often vehement longings and faintings after more love to Christ, and greater conformity to him ; especially longing after these two things, viz. to be more perfect in *humility* and *adoration ;* the flesh and heart seems often to cry out for a lying low before God, and adoring him with greater love and humility : the thoughts of the perfect humility with which the saints in heaven worship God, and fall down before his throne, have often overcome the body, and set it into a great agitation. A great delight in singing praises to God and Jesus Christ, and longing that this present life may be, as it were, one continued song of praise to God ; longing, as the person expressed it, to sit and sing this life away ; and an overcoming pleasure in the thoughts of spending an eternity in that exercise : a living by faith to a great degree ; a constant and extraordinary distrust of our own strength and wisdom ; a great dependence on God for his help, in order to the performance of any thing to God's acceptance, and being restrained from the most horrid sins, and running upon God, even on his neck, and on the thick bosses of his buckler : such a sense of the black ingratitude of true saints' coldness and deadness in religion, and their setting their hearts on the things of this world, as to overcome the bodily frame : a great longing that all the children of God might be lively in religion, fervent in their love, and active in the service of God ; and when there have been appearances of

it in others, rejoicing so in beholding the pleasing sight, that the joy of soul has been too great for the body : taking pleasure in the thoughts of watching and striving against sin, and fighting through the way to heaven, and filling up this life with hard labor, and bearing the cross for Christ, as an opportunity to give God honor ; not desiring to rest from labors till arrived in heaven, but abhorring the thoughts of it, and seeming astonished that God's own children should be backward to strive and deny themselves for God : earnest longings that all God's people might be clothed with humility and meekness, like the Lamb of God, and feel nothing in their hearts but love and compassion to all mankind ; and great grief when any thing to the contrary seems to appear in any of the children of God, as any bitterness, or fierceness of zeal, or censoriousness, or reflecting uncharitably on others, or disputing with any appearance of heat of spirit ; a deep concern for the good of others' souls ; a melting compassion to those that looked on themselves as in a state of nature, and to saints under darkness, so as to cause the body to faint : a universal benevolence to mankind, with a longing, as it were, to embrace the whole world in the arms of pity and love ; ideas of suffering from enemies, the utmost conceivable rage and cruelty, with a disposition felt to fervent love and pity in such a case, so far as it could be realized in thought ; fainting with pity to the world that lies in ignorance and wickedness ; sometimes a disposition felt to a life given up to mourning alone in a wilderness over a lost and miserable world ; compassion towards them being often to that degree that would allow of no support or rest but in going to God and pouring out the soul in prayer for them : earnest desires that the work of God that is now in the land may be carried on, and that with greater purity, and freedom from all bitter zeal, censoriousness, spiritual pride, hot disputes, &c. ; a vehement and constant desire for the setting up of Christ's kingdom through the earth, as a kingdom of holiness, purity, love, peace, and happiness to mankind : the

soul often entertained with unspeakable delight, and bodily strength overborne at the thoughts of heaven, as a world of love, where love shall be the saints' eternal food, and they shall dwell in the light of love, and swim in an ocean of love, and where the very air and breath will be nothing but love ; love to the people of God, or God's true saints, as such that have the image of Christ, and as those that will in a very little time shine in his perfect image, that has been attended with that endearment and oneness of heart, and that sweetness and ravishment of soul, that has been altogether inexpressible : the strength very often taken away with longings that others might love God more, and serve God better, and have more of his comfortable presence, than the person that was the subject of these longings, desiring to follow the whole world to heaven, or that every one should go before, and be higher in grace and happiness, not by this person's diminution, but by others' increase : a delight in conversing of things of religion, and in seeing Christians together, talking of the most spiritual and heavenly things in religion, in a lively and feeling manner, and very frequently overcome with the pleasure of such conversation : a great sense often expressed of the importance of the duty of charity to the poor, and how much the generality of Christians come short in the practice of it : a great sense of the need God's ministers have of much of the Spirit of God, at this day especially, and most earnest longings and wrestlings with God for them, so as to take away the bodily strength : the greatest, fullest, longest continued, and most constant assurance of the favor of God, and of a title to future glory, that ever I saw any appearance of in any person, enjoying, especially of late, (to use the person's own expression,) *the riches of full assurance :* formerly longing to die with something of impatience, but lately, since that resignation forementioned about three years ago, an uninterrupted, entire resignation to God with respect to life or death, sickness or health, ease or pain, which has remained unchanged

and unshaken, when actually under extreme and violent pains, and in times of threatenings of immediate death; but though there be this patience and submission, yet the thoughts of death and the day of judgment are always exceeding sweet to the soul: this resignation is also attended with a constant resignation of the lives of dearest earthly friends, and sometimes when some of their lives have been imminently threatened; often expressing the sweetness of the liberty of having wholly left the world, and renounced all for God, and having nothing but God, in whom is an infinite fullness. These things have been attended with a constant sweet peace and calm and serenity of soul, without any cloud to interrupt it; a continual rejoicing in all the works of God's hands, the works of nature, and God's daily works of providence, all appearing with a sweet smile upon them; a wonderful access to God by prayer, as it were, seeing him, and sensibly immediately conversing with him, as much oftentimes (to use the person's own expressions) as if Christ were here on earth, sitting on a visible throne, to be approached to and conversed with; frequent, plain, sensible, and immediate answers of prayer; all tears wiped away; all former troubles and sorrows of life forgotten, and all sorrow and sighing fled away, excepting grief for past sins, and for remaining corruption, and that Christ is loved no more, and that God is no more honored in the world, and a compassionate grief towards fellow-creatures; a daily sensible doing and suffering every thing for God, for a long time past, eating for God, and working for God, and sleeping for God, and bearing pain and trouble for God, and doing all as the service of love, and so doing it with a continual, uninterrupted cheerfulness, peace, and joy. O how good, said the person once, is it to work for God in the day-time, and at night to lie down under his smiles! High experiences and religious affections in this person have not been attended with any disposition at all to neglect the necessary business of a secular calling, to spend the time in reading and prayer,

and other exercises of devotion; but worldly business has been attended with great alacrity, as part of the service of God; the person declaring that it being done thus, it is found to be as good as prayer. These things have been accompanied with an exceeding concern and zeal for moral duties, and that all professors may with them adorn the doctrine of God their Savior; and an uncommon care to perform relative and social duties, and a noted eminence in them; a great inoffensiveness of life and conversation in the sight of others; a great meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of spirit and behavior; and a great alteration in those things that formerly used to be the person's failings; seeming to be much overcome and swallowed up by the late great increase of grace, to the observation of those that are most conversant and most intimately acquainted: in times of the brightest light and highest flights of love and joy, finding no disposition to any opinion of being now perfectly free from sin, (agreeable to the notion of the *Wesleys* and their followers, and some other high pretenders to spirituality in these days,) but exceedingly the contrary: at such times especially, seeing how loathsome and polluted the soul is, soul and body, and every act and word appearing like rottenness and corruption in that pure and holy light of God's glory: not slighting instruction or means of grace any more for having had great discoveries; on the contrary, never more sensible of the need of instruction than now. And one thing more may be added, viz. that these things have been attended with a particular dislike of placing religion much in dress, and spending much zeal about those things that in themselves are matters of indifference, or an affecting to show humility and devotion by a mean habit, or a demure and melancholy countenance, or any thing singular and superstitious.

SECTION VI.

This is a glorious work of God.

Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the fruits of a distempered brain, let my brain be evermore possessed of that happy distemper! If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may be all seized with this benign, meek, beneficent, beatifical, glorious distraction! If agitations of body were found in the French prophets, and ten thousand prophets more, it is little to their purpose who bring it as an objection against such a work as this, unless their purpose be to disprove the whole of the Christian religion. The great affections and high transports that others have lately been under, are in general of the same kind with those in the instance that has been given, though not to so high a degree, and many of them not so pure and unmixed, and so well regulated. I have had opportunity to observe many instances here and elsewhere; and though there are some instances of great affections in which there has been a great mixture of nature with grace, and in some a sad degenerating of religious affections; yet there is that uniformity observable, that it is easy to be seen that in general it is the same spirit from whence the work in all parts of the land has originated. And what notions have they of religion, that reject what has been described as not true religion? What shall we find to answer those expressions in scripture, "the peace of God that passes all understanding; rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, in believing and in loving an unseen Savior; all joy and peace in believing; God's shining into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ; with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and being changed into the same image, from glory to glory,

even as by the Spirit of the Lord; having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given to us: having the Spirit of God, and of glory rest upon us; a being called out of darkness into marvelous light; and having the day-star arise in our hearts:" I say, if those things that have been mentioned do not answer these expressions, what else can we find out that does answer them? Those that do not think such things as these to be the fruits of the true Spirit, would do well to consider what kind of spirit they are waiting and praying for, and what sort of fruits they expect he should produce when he comes. I suppose it will generally be allowed that there is such a thing as a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God to be expected, to introduce very joyful and glorious times upon religious accounts; times wherein holy love and joy will be raised to a great height in true Christians: but if those things that have been mentioned be rejected, what is left that we can find wherewith to patch up a notion, or form an idea, of the high, blessed, joyful religion of these times? What is that any have a notion of, that is very sweet, excellent, and joyful, of a religious nature, that is entirely of a different nature from these things?

Those that are waiting for the fruits in order to determine whether this be the work of God or no, would do well to consider two things: 1. What they are waiting for: whether it be not this; to have this wonderful religious influence that is on the minds of people over and past, and then to see how they will behave themselves? That is, to have grace subside, and the actings of it in a great measure to cease, and to have persons grow cold and dead, and then to see whether after that, they will behave themselves with that exactness and brightness of conversation, that is to be expected of lively Christians, or those that are in the vigorous exercises of grace. There are many that will not be satisfied with any exactness or laboriousness in religion now, while persons have their minds much moved, and their affections are high; for they lay it to their flash of affection, and heat of zeal, as they

call it: they are waiting to see whether they will carry themselves as well when these affections are over: that is, they are waiting to have persons sicken and lose their strength, that they may see whether they will then behave themselves like healthy, strong men. I would desire that they would also consider whether they be not waiting for more than is reasonably to be expected, supposing this to be really a great work of God, and much more than has been found in former great outpourings of the Spirit of God, that have been universally acknowledged in the Christian church? Do not they expect fewer instances of apostasy, and evidences of hypocrisy in professors, and those that for the present seem to be under the influences of the Spirit, than were after that great outpouring of the Spirit in the apostles' days, or that which was in the time of the reformation? And do not they stand prepared to make a mighty argument of it against this work, if there should be *half* so many? And 2. They would do well to consider how *long* they will wait to see the good fruit of this work, before they will determine in favor of it. Is not their waiting unlimited? The visible fruit that is to be expected of a pouring out of the Spirit of God on a country, is a visible reformation in that country: What reformation has lately been brought to pass in New England, by this work, has been before observed: and has it not continued long enough already, to give reasonable satisfaction? If God cannot work on the hearts of a people after such a manner, as to show his hand so plainly, as reasonably to expect it should be acknowledged in a year and a half, or two years time; yet surely it is unreasonable, that our expectations and demands should be unlimited, and our waiting without any bounds.

As there is the clearest evidence, from those things that have been observed, that this is the work of God, so it is evident that it is a very great and wonderful, and exceeding glorious work of God. This is certain, that it is a great and wonderful event, a strange revolution, an unexpected, sur-

prising overturning of things, suddenly brought to pass; such as never has been seen in New England, and scarce ever has been heard of in any land. Who that saw the state of things in New England a few years ago, the state that it was settled in, and the way that we had been so long going on in, would have thought that in so little a time there would be such a change? This is undoubtedly either a very great work of God, or a great work of the devil, as to the main substance of it. For though undoubtedly, God and the devil may work together at the same time, and in the same land; and when God is at work, especially if he be very remarkably at work, Satan will do his utmost endeavor to intrude, and by intermingling his work, to darken and hinder God's work; yet God and the devil do not work together in producing the same event, and in effecting the same change in the hearts and lives of men. But it is apparent that there are some things wherein the main substance of this work consists, a certain effect that is produced, and alteration that is made in the apprehensions, affections, dispositions, and behavior of men, in which there is a likeness and agreement everywhere: Now this, I say, is either a wonderful work of God, or a mighty work of the devil; and so is either a most happy event greatly to be admired and rejoiced in, or a most awful calamity. Therefore if what has been said before, be sufficient to determine it to be, as to the main, the work of God, then it must be acknowledged to be a very wonderful and glorious work of God.

Such a work is, in its nature and kind, the most glorious of any work of God whatsoever; and is always so spoken of in scripture. It is the work of redemption (the great end of all other works of God, and of which the work of creation was but a shadow) in the event, success and end of it. It is the work of a new creation, that is infinitely more glorious than the old. I am bold to say, that the work of God in the conversion of one soul, considered together with the source, foundation, and purchase of it, and also the benefit, end,

and eternal issue of it, is a more glorious work of God than the creation of the whole material universe: it is the most glorious of God's works, as it above all others manifests the glory of God: it is spoken of in scripture, as that which shows *the exceeding greatness of God's power*, and *the glory and riches of divine grace*, and wherein Christ has the most glorious triumph over his enemies, and wherein God is mightily exalted: and it is a work above all others glorious, as it concerns the happiness of mankind; more happiness, and a greater benefit to man, is the fruit of each single drop of such a shower, than all the temporal good of the most happy revolution in a land or nation amounts to, or all that a people could gain by the conquest of the world.

And as this work is very glorious in its nature, so it is in its degree and circumstances. It will appear very glorious if we consider the unworthiness of the people that are the subjects of it; what obligations God has laid us under by the special privileges we have enjoyed for our souls' good, and the great things God did for us at our first settlement in the land; and how he has followed us with his goodness to this day, and how we have abused his goodness; how long we have been revolting more and more (as all confess), and how very corrupt we were become at last; in how great a degree we had cast off God, and forsaken the fountain of living waters: how obstinate we have been under all manner of means that God has used with us to reclaim us: how often we have mocked God with hypocrital pretenses of humiliation, as in our annual days of public fasting, and other things, while instead of reforming, we only grew worse and worse; how dead a time it was every where before this work began: If we consider these things, we shall be most stupidly ungrateful if we do not acknowledge God's visiting of us as he has done, as an instance of the glorious triumph of free and sovereign grace.

The work is very glorious if we consider the extent of it; being in this respect vastly beyond any former outpouring of

the Spirit that ever was known in New England. There has formerly sometimes been a remarkable awakening and success of the means of grace, in some particular congregation; and this used to be much taken notice of, and acknowledged to be glorious, though the towns and congregations round about continued dead: but now God has brought to pass a new thing, he has wrought a great work of this nature, that has extended from one end of the land to the other, besides what has been wrought in other British colonies in America.

The work is very glorious in the great numbers that have, to appearance, been turned from sin to God, and so delivered from a wretched captivity to sin and Satan, saved from everlasting burnings, and made heirs of eternal glory. How high an honor, and great reward of their labors, have some eminent persons, of note in the church of God, signified that they should esteem it, if they should be made the instruments of the conversion and eternal salvation of but *one* soul? And no greater event than that is thought worthy of great notice in heaven, among the hosts of glorious angels, who rejoice and sing on such an occasion: and when there are many thousands of souls thus converted and saved, shall it be esteemed worth but little notice, and be mentioned with coldness and indifference here on earth, by those among whom such a work is wrought?

The work has been very glorious and wonderful in many circumstances and events of it, that have been extraordinary, wherein God has in an uncommon manner made his hand visible, and his power conspicuous; as in the extraordinary degrees of awakening, the suddenness of conversions in innumerable instances, in whom though the work was quick, yet the thing wrought is manifestly durable. How common a thing has it been for great part of a congregation to be at once moved, by a mighty invisible power; and for six, eight, or ten souls to be converted to God (to all appearance) in an exercise, in whom the visible change still continues? How

great an alteration has been made in some towns; yea, some populous towns; the change still abiding? And how many very vicious persons have been wrought upon, so as to become visibly new creatures? God has also made his hand very visible, and his work glorious, in the multitudes of little children that have been wrought upon: I suppose there have been some hundreds of instances of this nature of late, any one of which formerly would have been looked upon so remarkable, as to be worthy to be recorded, and published through the land. The work is very glorious in its influences and effects on many that have been very ignorant and barbarous, as I before observed of the Indians and Negroes.

The work is also exceeding glorious in the high attainments of Christians, in the extraordinary degrees of light, love, and spiritual joy, that God has bestowed upon great multitudes. In this respect also, the land in all parts has abounded in such instances, any one of which, if they had happened formerly, would have been thought worthy to be taken notice of by God's people, throughout the British dominions. The New Jerusalem in this respect has begun to come down from heaven, and perhaps never were more of the prelibations of heaven's glory given upon earth.

There being a great many errors and sinful irregularities mixed with this work of God, arising from our weakness, darkness, and corruption, do not hinder this work of God's power and grace from being very glorious. Our follies and sins that we mix, do in some respects manifest the glory of it. The glory of divine power and grace is set off with the greater lustre, by what appears at the same time of the weakness of the earthen vessel. It is God's pleasure that there should be something remarkably to manifest the weakness and unworthiness of the subject, at the same time that he displays the excellency of his power, and riches of his grace. And I doubt not but some of those things that make some of us here on earth to be out of humor, and to look on this work with a sour, displeased countenance, do heighten the songs of the

angels, when they praise God and the Lamb for what they see of the glory of God's all-sufficiency, and the efficacy of Christ's redemption. And how unreasonable is it that we should be backward to acknowledge the glory of what God has done, because withal, the devil, and we in hearkening to him, have done a great deal of mischief.

THOUGHTS ON THE REVIVAL, &c.

PART II.

SHOWING THE OBLIGATIONS THAT ALL ARE UNDER, TO ACKNOWLEDGE, REJOICE IN, AND PROMOTE THIS WORK, AND THE GREAT DANGER OF THE CONTRARY.

SECTION I.

The danger of lying still, and keeping long silence respecting any remarkable work of God.

THERE are many things in the word of God, that show that when God remarkably appears in any great work for his church, and against his enemies, it is a most dangerous thing, and highly provoking to God, to be slow and backward to acknowledge and honor God in the work, and to lie still and not to put to a helping hand. Christ's people are in scripture represented as his army; he is the Lord of hosts or armies: He is the Captain of the host of the Lord, as he called himself when he appeared to Joshua, with a sword drawn in his hand, Joshua v. 13, 14, 15. He is the Captain of his people's salvation; and therefore it may well be highly resented if they do not resort to him when he orders his banner to be displayed; or if they refuse to follow him when he blows the trumpet, and gloriously appears going forth against his enemies. God expects that every living soul should have his attention roused on such an occasion, and should most cheerfully yield to the call, and heedfully

and diligently obey it; Isaiah xviii. 3. "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth the trumpet, hear ye." Especially should all Israel be gathered after their captain, as we read they were after Ehud, when he blew the trumpet in mount Ephraim, when he had slain Eglon, king of Moab, Judg. iii. 27, 28. How severe is the martial law in such a case, when any of an army refuses to obey the sound of the trumpet, and follow his general to the battle? God at such a time appears in peculiar manifestations of his glory; and therefore not to be affected and animated, and to lie still, and refuse to follow God, will be resented as a high contempt of him. If a subject should stand by, and be a spectator of the solemnity of his prince's coronation and should appear silent and sullen, when all the multitude were testifying their loyalty and joy, with loud acclamations; how greatly would he expose himself to be treated as a rebel, and quickly to perish by the authority of the prince that he refuses to honor?

At a time when God manifests himself in such a great work for his church, there is no such thing as being neuters; there is a necessity of being either for or against the King that then gloriously appears. As when a king is crowned, and there are public manifestations of joy on that occasion, there is no such thing as standing by as an indifferent spectator; all must appear as loyal subjects, and express their joy on that occasion, or be accounted enemies: so it always is when God, in any great dispensation of his providence, does remarkably set his King on his holy hill of Zion, and Christ in an extraordinary manner comes down from heaven to the earth, and appears in his visible church in a great work of salvation for his people: so it was when Christ came down from heaven in his incarnation, and appeared on earth in his human presence; there was no such thing as being neuters, neither on his side nor against him: those that sat still and said nothing, and did not declare for him, and come and

join with him, after he, by his word and works, had given sufficient evidence who he was, were justly looked upon as his enemies; as Christ says, Matt. xii. 30. "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." So it is in a time when Christ is remarkably spiritually present, as well as when he is bodily present; and when he comes to carry on the work of redemption in the application of it, as well as in the revelation and purchase. If a king should come into one of his provinces, that had been oppressed by its foes, where some of his subjects had fallen off to the enemy, and joined with them against their lawful sovereign and his loyal subjects; I say, if the lawful sovereign himself should come into the province, and should ride forth there against his enemies, and should call upon all that were on his side to come and gather themselves to him; there would be no such thing, in such a case, as standing neuter: they that lay still and staid at a distance would undoubtedly be looked upon and treated as rebels. So in the day of battle, when two armies join, there is no such thing for any present as being of neither party, all must be on one side or the other; and they that be not found with the conqueror in such a case, must expect to have his weapons turned against them, and to fall with the rest of his enemies.

When God manifests himself with such glorious power in a work of this nature, he appears especially determined to put honor upon his Son, and to fulfill his oath that he has sworn to him, that he would make every knee to bow, and every tongue to confess to him. God hath had it much on his heart, from all eternity, to glorify his dear and only begotten Son; and there are some special seasons that he appoints to that end, wherein he comes forth with omnipotent power to fulfill his promise and oath to him: and these times are times of remarkable pouring out of his Spirit, to advance his kingdom; such a day is a day of his power, wherein his people shall be made willing, and he shall rule in the midst of his enemies;

these especially are the times wherein God declares his firm decree that his Son shall reign on his holy hill of Zion: and therefore those that at such a time do not kiss the Son, as he then manifests himself, and appears in the glory of his majesty and grace, expose themselves to *perish from the way*, and to be *dashed in pieces with a rod of iron.*

As such a time is a time wherein God eminently *sets his King on his holy hill of Zion*, so it is a time wherein he remarkably fulfills that in Isa. xxviii. 16. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." Which the two apostles, Peter and Paul (1 Pet. ii. 6, 7, 8, and Rom. ix. 33) join with that prophecy, Isa. viii. 14, 15. "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and taken." As signifying that both are fulfilled together. Yea, both are joined together by the prophet Isaiah himself; as you may see in the context of that forementioned, Isa. xxviii. 16. In v. 13. preceding it is said, "But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little, that they might go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken." And accordingly it always is so, that when Christ is in a peculiar and eminent manner manifested and magnified, by a glorious work of God in his church, as a foundation and a sanctuary for some, he is remarkably a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, a gin and a snare to others. They that continue long to stumble, and be offended and ensnared in their minds, at such a great and glorious work of Christ, in God's account, stumble at Christ and are offended in him; for the work is that by which he makes Christ manifest, and shows his glory, and by which he makes *the Stone that the builders refused, to become the head of the corner.*

This shows how dangerous it is to continue always stumbling at such a work, for ever doubting of it, and forbearing fully to acknowledge it, and give God the glory of it: such persons are in danger *to go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken*, and to have Christ *a stone of stumbling* to them, that shall be an occasion of their ruin; while he is to others *a sanctuary*, and a *sure foundation.*

The prophet Isaiah, Isa. xxix. 14. speaks of God's proceeding to do a marvelous work and a wonder, which should stumble and confound the wisdom of the wise and prudent; which the apostle, in Acts xiii. 31. applies to the glorious work of salvation wrought in those days by the redemption of Christ, and that glorious outpouring of the Spirit to apply it that followed; the prophet in the context of that place in Isa. xxix. speaking of the same thing, and of the prophets and rulers and seers, those wise and prudent whose eyes God has closed, says to them, v. 9. *Stay yourselves and wonder.* In the original it is, *be ye slow and wonder.* I leave it to others to consider whether it be natural to interpret it thus, "Wonder at this *marvelous work;* let it be a strange thing, a great mystery that you know not what to make of, and that you are very slow and backward to acknowledge, long delaying to come to a determination concerning it." And what persons are in danger of, that wonder, and are thus slow to acknowledge God in such a work, we learn by that of the apostle in that forementioned Acts xiii. 41. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work in which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

The church of Christ is called upon greatly to rejoice, when at any time Christ remarkably appears, coming to his church, to carry on the work of salvation, to enlarge his own kingdom, and to deliver poor souls out of the pit wherein there is no water, in Zech. ix. 9, 10, 11. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation, his

dominion shall be from sea to sea as for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." Christ was pleased to give a notable typical, or symbolical representation of such a great event as is spoken of in that prophecy in his solemn entry into the literal Jerusalem, which was a type of the church or daughter of Zion, there spoken of; probably intending it as a figure and prelude of that great actual fulfillment of this prophecy, that was to be after his ascension, by the pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the apostles, and that more full accomplishment that should be in the latter ages of the Christian church. We have an account, that when Christ made this his solemn entry into Jerusalem, and the whole multitude of the disciples were rejoicing and praising God, with loud voices, for all the mighty works that they had seen, the Pharisees from among the multitude said to Christ, *Master, rebuke thy disciples;* but we are told, Luke xix. 39, 40. Christ "answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Signifying that if Christ's professing disciples should be unaffected on such an occasion, and should not appear openly to acknowledge and rejoice in the glory of God therein appearing, it would manifest such fearful hardness of heart, so exceeding that of the stones, that the very stones would condemn them. Should not this make those consider, who have held their peace so long, since Christ has come to our Zion, having salvation, and so wonderfully manifested his glory in this mighty work of his Spirit, and so many of his disciples have been *rejoicing and praising God with loud voices?*

It must be acknowledged that so great and wonderful a work of God's Spirit, is a work wherein God's hand is remarkably *lifted up*, and wherein he displays his *majesty*, and shows great *favor* and mercy to sinners, in the glorious opportunity he gives them; and by which he makes our land to become much more of a *land of uprightness;* therefore that place, Isa. xxvi. 10, 11, shows the great danger of

not seeing God's hand, and acknowledging his glory and majesty in such a work: "Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them."

SECTION II.

The latter-day glory is probably to begin in America.

It is not unlikely that this work of God's Spirit, that is so extraordinary and wonderful, is the dawning, or at least a prelude, of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in scripture, which in progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind. If we consider how long since, the things foretold, as what should precede this great event, have been accomplished; and how long this event has been expected by the church of God, and thought to be nigh by the most eminent men of God in the church; and withal consider what the state of things now is, and has for a considerable time been, in the church of God, and world of mankind, we cannot reasonably think otherwise, than that the beginning of this great work of God must be near. And there are many things that make it probable that this work will begin in America. It is signified that it shall begin in some very remote part of the world, that the rest of the world have no communication with but by navigation, in Isa. lx. 9. "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring my sons from far." It is exceeding manifest that this chapter is a prophecy of the prosperity of the church, in its most glorious state on earth, in the latter days: and I can-

not think that any thing else can be intended but America by the isles that are far off, from whence the first-born sons of that glorious day shall be brought. Indeed, by *the isles*, in prophecies of gospel times, is very often meant Europe: It is so in prophecies of that great spreading of the gospel that should be soon after Christ's time, because it was far separated from that part of the world where the church of God had till then been, by the sea. But this prophecy cannot have respect to the conversion of Europe, in the time of that great work of God, in the primitive ages of the Christian church; for it was not fulfilled then: the isles and ships of Tarshish, thus understood, did not wait for God first; that glorious work did not begin in Europe, but in Jerusalem, and had for a considerable time, been very wonderfully carried on in Asia, before it reached Europe. And as it is not that work of God that is chiefly intended in this chapter, but that more glorious work that should be in the latter ages of the Christian church, therefore some other part of the world is here intended by the isles, that should be as Europe then was, far separated from that part of the world where the church had before been, by the sea, and with which it can have no communication but by the ships of Tarshish. And what is chiefly intended is not the British isles, nor any isles near the other continent: for they are spoken of as at a great distance from that part of the world where the church had till then been. This prophecy, therefore, seems plainly to point out America, as the first fruits of that glorious day.

God has made as it were two worlds here below, the old and the new (according to the names they are now called by) two great habitable continents, far separated one from the other; the latter is but newly discovered, it was formerly wholly unknown, from age to age, and is as it were now but newly created: It has been, till of late, wholly the possession of Satan, the church of God having never been in it, as it has been in the other continent, from the beginning of the world. This new world is probably now discovered, that the new

and most glorious state of God's church on earth might commence there; that God might in it begin a new world in a spiritual respect, when he creates the *new heavens* and *new earth.*

God has already put that honor upon the other continent, that Christ was born there literally, and there made the *purchase of redemption:* so, as Providence observes a kind of equal distribution of things, it is not unlikely that the great spiritual birth of Christ, and the most glorious *application of redemption* is to begin in this: as the elder sister brought forth Judah, of whom came Christ, and so she was the mother or Christ; but the younger sister, after long barrenness, brought forth Joseph and Benjamin, the beloved children: Joseph, that had the most glorious apparel, the coat of many colors, who was separated from his brethren, and was exalted to such glory out of a dark dungeon, and fed and saved the world, when ready to perish with famine, and was as a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches ran over the wall, and was blessed with all manner of blessings and precious things of heaven and earth, through the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush; and was, as by the horns of a unicorn, to push the people together, to the ends of the earth, i. e. conquer the world. See Gen. xlix. 22, &c. and Deut. xxxiii. 13, &c.: And Benjamin, whose mess was five times so great as that of any of his brethren, and to whom Joseph, that type of Christ, gave wealth and raiment far beyond all the rest. Gen. xlv. 22.

The other continent hath slain Christ, and has from age to age shed the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, and has often been as it were deluged with the church's blood: God has therefore probably reserved the honor of building the glorious temple to the daughter, that has not shed so much blood, when those times of the peace and prosperity, and glory of the church shall commence, that were typified by the reign of Solomon.

The Gentiles first received the true religion from the Jews: God's church of ancient times, had been among them, and Christ was of them: but that there might be a kind of equality in the dispensations of providence, God has so ordered it, that when the Jews come to be admitted to the benefits of the evangelical dispensation, and to receive their highest privileges of all, they should receive the gospel from the Gentiles: though Christ was of them, yet they have been guilty of crucifying him; it is therefore the will of God, that that people should not have the honor of communicating the blessings of the kingdom of God in its most glorious state, to the Gentiles, but on the contrary, they shall receive the gospel in the beginning of that glorious day, from the Gentiles. In some analogy to this, I apprehend God's dealings will be with the two continents. America has received the true religion of the old continent; the church of ancient times has been there, and Christ is from thence: but that there may be an equality, and inasmuch as that continent has crucified Christ, they shall not have the honor of communicating religion in its most glorious state to us, but we to them.

The old continent has been the source and original of mankind, in several respects. The first parents of mankind dwelt there; and there dwelt Noah and his sons; and there the second Adam was born, and was crucified, and rose again: and it is probable that, in some measure to balance these things, the most glorious renovation of the world shall originate from the new continent, and the church of God in that respect be from hence. And so it is probable that that will come to pass in spirituals, that has in temporals, with respect to America; that whereas, till of late, the world was supplied with its silver and gold and earthly treasures from the old continent, now it is supplied chiefly from the new, so the course of things in spiritual respects will be in like manner turned.

And it is worthy to be noted that America was discovered about the time of the reformation, or but little before; which reformation was the first thing that God did towards the glorious renovation of the world, after it had sunk into the depths of darkness and ruin under the great Antichristian apostasy. So that as soon as this new world is (as it were) created, and stands forth in view, God presently goes about doing some great thing to make way for the introduction of the church's latter day glory, that is to have its first seat in, and is to take its rise from that new world.

It is agreeable to God's manner of working, when he accomplishes any glorious work in the world, to introduce a new and more excellent state of his church, to begin his work where his church had not been till then, and where was no foundation already laid, that the power of God might be the more conspicuous; that the work might appear to be entirely God's, and be more manifestly a creation out of nothing; agreeable to Hos. i. 10. "And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God." When God is about to turn the earth into a paradise, he does not begin his work where there is some good growth already, but in a wilderness, where nothing grows, and nothing is to be seen but dry sand and barren rocks; that the light may shine out of darkness, and the world be replenished from emptiness, and the earth watered by springs from a droughty desert; agreeable to many prophecies of scripture, as Isa. xxxii. 15. "Until the Spirit be poured from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field;" and chap. xviii. 19. "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water; I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle and oil-tree; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together:" and chap. xliii. 20. "I will give waters in the wil-

derness, and rivers in the desert to give drink to my people, my chosen." And many other parallel scriptures might be mentioned.

I observed before, that when God is about to do some great work for his church, his manner is to begin at the lower end; so when he is about to renew the whole habitable earth, it is probable that he will begin in this utmost, meanest, youngest, and weakest part of it, where the church of God has been planted last of all; and so the first shall be last, and the last first; and that will be fulfilled in an eminent manner in Isa. xxiv. 19. "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous."

There are several things that seem to me to argue, that when the Sun of Righteousness, the sun of the new heavens and new earth, comes to rise, and "comes forth as the bridegroom" of his church, "rejoicing as a strong man to run his race, having his going forth from the end of heaven, and his circuit to the end of it, that nothing may be hid from the light and heat of it;"* that the sun shall rise in the west, contrary to the course of this world, or the course of things in the old heavens and earth. The course of God's providences shall in that day be so wonderfully altered in many respects, that God will, as it were, change the course of nature, in answer to the prayers of his church; as God changed the course of nature, and caused the sun to go from the west to the east, when Hezekiah was healed, and God promised to do such great things for his church, to deliver it out of the hand of the king of Assyria, by that mighty slaughter by the angel, which is often used by the prophet Isaiah, as a type of the glorious deliverance of the church from her enemies in the latter days: the resurrection of He-

* It is evident that the Holy Spirit, in those expressions in Psalm xix. 4, 5, 6., has respect to something else besides the natural sun; and that an eye is had to the Sun of Righteousness, that by his light converts the soul, makes wise the simple, enlightens the eyes, and rejoices the heart; and by his preached gospel enlightens and warms the world of mankind; by the psalmist's own application, in v. 7., and the apostle's application of v. 4. in Rom. x. 18.

zekiah, the king and captain of the church, (as he is called. 2 Kings xx. 5.) as it were, from the dead, is given as an earnest of the church's resurrection and salvation, Isaiah xxxviii. 6., and is a type of the resurrection of Christ. At the same time there is a resurrection of the sun, or coming back and rising again from the west, whither it had gone down; which is also a type of the Sun of Righteousness. The sun was brought back ten degrees, which probably brought it to the meredian. The Sun of Righteousness has long been going down from east to west, and probably when the time comes of the church's deliverance from her enemies, so often typified by the Assyrians, the light will rise in the west, till it shines through the world, like the sun in its meridian brightness.

The same seems also to be represented by the course of the waters of the sanctuary, Ezek. xlvii., which was from west to east, which waters undoubtedly represent the Holy Spirit, in the progress of his saving influences, in the latter ages of the world; for it is manifest that the whole of those last chapters of Ezekiel, are concerning the glorious state of the church that shall then be.

And if we may suppose that this glorious work of God shall begin in any part of America, I think, if we consider the circumstances of the settlement of New England, it must needs appear the most likely of all American colonies, to be the place whence this work shall principally take its rise.

And if these things are so, it gives us most abundant reason to hope that what is now seen in America, and especially in New England, may prove the dawn of that glorious day: and the very uncommon and wonderful circumstances and events of this work, seem to me strongly to argue that God intends it as the beginning or forerunner of something vastly great.

SECTION III.

The danger of not acknowledging, and encouraging, and especially of deriding, this work.

I HAVE thus long insisted on this point, because if these things are so, it greatly manifests how much it behooves us to encourage and promote this work, and how dangerous it will be to forbear to do so.

It is very dangerous for God's professing people to lie still, and not to come to the help of the Lord, whenever he remarkably pours out his Spirit, to carry on the work of redemption in the application of it; but above all, when he comes forth in that last and greatest outpouring of his Spirit, to introduce that happy day of God's power and salvation, so often spoken of. That is especially the appointed season of the application of the redemption of Christ; it is the proper time of the kingdom of heaven upon earth, the appointed time of Christ's reign; the reign of Satan as god of this world lasts till then: this is the proper time of actual redemption, or new creation, as is evident by Isa. lxv. 17, 18., and lxvi. 12., and Rev. xxi. 1. All the outpourings of the Spirit of God that are before this are, as it were, by way of anticipation.

There was indeed a glorious season of the application of redemption, in the first ages of the Christian church, that began at Jerusalem on the day of pentecost; but that was not the proper time of ingathering; it was only, as it were, the feast of the first fruits; the ingathering is at the end of the year, or in the last ages of the Christian church, as is represented, Rev. xiv. 14, 15, 16., and will probably as much exceed what was in the first ages of the Christian church, though that filled the Roman empire, as that exceeded all

that had been before, under the Old Testament, confined only to the land of Judea.

The great danger of not appearing openly to acknowledge, rejoice in, and promote that great work of God, in bringing in that glorious harvest, is represented in Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18, 19. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which come up against Jerusalem, shall even go up, from year to year, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be that whoso will not come up, of all the families of the earth, unto Jerusalem, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." It is evident by all the context, that the glorious day of the church of God in the latter ages of the world, is the time spoken of. The *feast of tabernacles* here seems to signify that glorious spiritual feast, which God shall then make for his church, the same that is spoken of Isa. xxv. 6., and the great spiritual rejoicings of God's people at that time. There were three great feasts in Israel, at which all the males were appointed to go up to Jerusalem: the feast of the passover; and the feast of the first fruits, or the feast of pentecost; and the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, or the feast of tabernacles. In the first of these, viz. the feast of the passover, was represented the purchase of redemption by Jesus Christ, the paschal lamb, that was slain at the time of that feast. The other two that followed it, were to represent the two great seasons of the application of the purchased redemption: in the former of them, viz. the feast of the first fruits, which was called the feast of pentecost, was represented that time of the outpouring of the Spirit that was in the first ages of the Christian

church, for the bringing in the first fruits of Christ's redemption, which began at Jerusalem, on the day of pentecost: the other, which was the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, which the children of Israel were appointed to keep on occasion of their gathering in their corn, and their wine, and all the fruit of their land, and was called the feast of tabernacles, represented the other more joyful and glorious season of the application of Christ's redemption, which is to be in the latter days; the great day of ingathering of the elect, the proper and appointed time of gathering in God's fruits, when the angel of the covenant shall thrust in his sickle, and gather the harvest of the earth; and the clusters of the vine of the earth shall also be gathered. This was upon many accounts the greatest feast of the three: there were much greater tokens of rejoicing in this feast, than any other: the people then dwelt in booths of green boughs, and were commanded to take the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and to rejoice before the Lord their God: which represents the flourishing, beautiful, pleasant state the church shall be in, rejoicing in God's grace and love, triumphing over all her enemies, at the time typified by this feast. The tabernacle of God was first set up among the children of Israel, at the time of the feast of tabernacles; but in that glorious time of the Christian church, God will, above all other times, set up his tabernacle amongst men. Rev. xxi. 3. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." The world is supposed to have been created about the time of year wherein the feast of tabernacles was appointed; so in that glorious time God will create a new heaven and a new earth. The temple of Solomon was dedicated at the time of the feast of tabernacles, when God descended in a pillar of cloud, and dwelt in the temple: so at this happy time, the temple of God shall

be gloriously built up in the world, and God shall, in a wonderful manner, come down from heaven to dwell with his church. Christ is supposed to have been born at the feast of tabernacles ; so at the commencement of that glorious day, Christ shall be born ; then, above all other times, shall "the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, that is in travail, and pained to be delivered, bring forth her son, to rule all nations," Rev. xii., at the beginning. The feast of tabernacles was the last feast that Israel had in the whole year, before the face of the earth was destroyed by the winter ; presently after the rejoicings of that feast were past, a tempetuous season began, Acts xxvii. 9. "Sailing was now dangerous, because the feast was now already past." So this great feast of the Christian church will be the last feast she shall have on earth : soon after it is past, this lower world will be destroyed. At the feast of tabernacles, Israel left their houses to dwell in booths, or green tents, which signifies the great weanedness of God's people from the world, as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and their great joy therein. Israel were prepared for the feast of tabernacles, by the feast of trumpets, and the day of atonement, both on the same month ; so way shall be made for the joy of the church of God, in its glorious state on earth, by the extraordinary preaching of the gospel, and deep repentance and humiliation for past sins, and the great and long continued deadness and carnality of the visible church. Christ, at the great feast of tabernacles, stood in Jerusalem, and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink : he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters :" signifying the extraordinary freedom and riches of divine grace towards sinners at that day, and the extraordinary measures of the Holy Spirit that shall be then given, agreeable to Rev. xxi. 6., and xxii. 17.

It is threatened here in this fourteenth chapter of Zechariah, that those who at that time shall not come to keep this

feast, i. e. that shall not acknowledge God's glorious works, and praise his name, and rejoice with his people, but should stand at a distance, as unbelieving and disaffected, *upon them shall be no rain ;* and that this shall be the plague wherewith they shall all be smitten ; that is, they shall have no share in that shower of divine blessing that shall then descend on the earth, that spiritual rain spoken of, Isa. xliv. 3. But God would give them over to hardness of heart, and blindness of mind.

The curse is yet in a more awful manner denounced against such as shall appear as opposers at that time, v. 12. "And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem, their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth." Here also in all probability it is a spiritual judgment, or a plague and curse from God upon the soul, rather than upon the body, that is intended ; that such persons, who at that time shall oppose God's people in his work, shall, in an extraordinary manner, be given over to a state of spiritual death and ruin, that they shall remarkably appear dead while alive, and shall be as walking rotten corpses, while they go about amongst men.

The great danger of not joining with God's people at that glorious day is also represented, Isa. lx. 12. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish ; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."

Most of the great temporal deliverances that were wrought for Israel of old, as divines and expositors observe, were typical of the great spiritual works of God for the salvation of men's souls, and the deliverance and prosperity of his church, in the days of the gospel ; and especially did they represent that greatest of all deliverances of God's church, and chief of God's works of actual salvation, that shall be in the latter days, which, as has been observed, is above all others, the appointed time, and proper season of actual re-

demption of men's souls. But it may be observed that if any appeared to oppose God's work in those great temporal deliverances ; or if there were any of his professing people, that on such occasions lay still, and stood at a distance, and did not arise and acknowledge God in his work, and appear to promote it ; it was what in a remarkable manner incensed God's anger, and brought his curse upon such persons.

So when God wrought that great work of bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt (which was a type of God's delivering his church out of the spiritual Egypt, at the time of the fall of Antichrist, as as evident by Rev. xi. 8., and xv. 3.), how highly did God resent it, when the Amalekites appeared as opposers in that affair ! And how dreadfully did he curse them for it ! Exod. xvii. 14, 15, 16. " And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua ; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-Nissi ; for he said, because the Lord will have war with Amalek, from generation to generation." And accordingly we find that God remembered it a long time after, 1 Sam. xv. 3. And how highly did God resent it in the Moabites and Ammonites, that they did not lend a helping hand, and encourage and promote the affair ! Deut. xxiii. 3, 4. " An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord ; even to their tenth generation, shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever ; because they met you not with bread and with water, in the way when ye came forth out of Egypt." And how were the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, threatened, if they did not go and help their brethren in their wars against the Canaanites, Deut. xxxii. 20, 21, 22, 23., " And Moses said unto them, if ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the Lord to war, and will go all of you armed over Jordan, before the Lord, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,

and the land be subdued before the Lord, then afterward ye shall return and be guiltless before the Lord, and before Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the Lord; but if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out."

That was a glorious work of God that he wrought for Israel, when he delivered them from the Canaanites, by the hand of Deborah and Barak: almost every thing about it showed a remarkable hand of God. It was a prophetess, one immediately inspired by God, that called the people to the battle, and conducted them in the whole affair. The people seem to have been miraculously animated and encouraged in the matter, when they willingly offered themselves, and gathered together to the battle; they jeoparded their lives in the high places of the field, without being pressed or hired; when one would have thought they should have but little courage for such an undertaking; for what could a number of poor, weak, defenseless slaves do, without *a shield or spear to be seen among forty thousand of them*, to go against a great prince, with his mighty host, and nine hundred chariots of iron. And the success did wonderfully show the hand of God; which makes Deborah exultingly to say, Judg. v. 21. "O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength!" Christ with his heavenly host was engaged in that battle; and therefore it is said, v. 20, "They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." The work of God, therefore, in this victory and deliverance that Christ and his host wrought for Israel, was a type of that victory and deliverance which he will accomplish for his church in that great battle, that last conflict that the church shall have with her open enemies, that shall introduce the church's latter day glory; as appears by Rev. xvi. 16, (speaking of that great battle) "And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon," i. e. the mountain of Megiddo; alluding, as is supposed by expositors, to the place where the battle was fought with the host of Si-

sera, Judg. v. 19. "The kings came and fought, the kings of Canaan, in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo." Which can signify nothing else, than that this battle, which Christ and his church shall have with their enemies, is the antitype of the battle that was fought there. But what a dreadful curse from Christ, did some of God's professing people Israel, bring upon themselves, by lying still at that time, and not putting to a helping hand? Judg. v. 23. "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." The Angel of the Lord was the Captain of the host; he that had led Israel and fought for them in that battle, who is very often called *the Angel of the Lord*, in scripture; the same that appeared to Joshua with a sword drawn in his hand, and told him that *he was come as the Captain of the host of the Lord;* and the same glorious Captain that we have an account of, as leading forth his hosts to that battle, of which this was the type, Rev. xix. 11, &c. It seems the inhabitants of Meroz were unbelieving concerning this great work, nor would they hearken to Deborah's pretenses, nor did it enter into them that such a poor defenseless company should ever prevail against those that were so mighty; they did not acknowledge the hand of God, and therefore stood at a distance, and did nothing to promote the work: but what a bitter curse from God, did they bring upon themselves by it!

It is very probable that one great reason why the inhabitants of Meroz were so unbelieving concerning this work, was that they argued *à priori*; they did not like the beginning of it, it being a woman that first led the way, and had the chief conduct in the affair; nor could they believe that such despicable instruments, as a company of unarmed slaves, were ever like to effect so great a thing; and pride and unbelief wrought together, in not being willing to follow Deborah to the battle.

It was another glorious work of God that he wrought for Israel, in the victory that was obtained by Gideon over the Midianites and Amalekites, and the children of the east, when they came up against Israel like grasshoppers, a multitude that could not be numbered. This also was a remarkable type of the victory of Christ and his church over his enemies, by the pouring out of the Spirit with the preached gospel, as is evident by the manner of it, which Gideon was immediately directed to of God; which was not by human sword or bow, but only by blowing of trumpets, and by lights in earthen vessels. We read on this occasion, Gideon called the people together to help in this great affair; and that accordingly, great numbers resorted to him, and came to the help of the Lord, Judg. vii. 23, 24. But there were some also at that time, that were unbelieving, and would not acknowledge the hand of God in that work, though it was so great and wonderful, nor would they join to promote it; and they were the inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel: Gideon desired their help, when he was pursuing after Zeba and Zalmuna; but they despised his pretenses, and his confidence of the Lord's being on his side, to deliver those two great princes into the hands of such a despicable company, as he and his three hundred men, and would not own the work of God, nor afford Gideon any assistance: God proceeded in this work in a way that was exceeding cross to their pride. And they also refused to own the work, because they argued *à priori*; they could not believe that God would do such great things by such a despicable instrument; one of such a poor mean family in Manasseh, and he the least in his father's house; and the company that was with him appeared very wretched, being but three hundred men, and they weak and faint: but we see how they suffered for their folly, in not acknowledging, and appearing to promote this work of God. Gideon when he returned from the victory, *took them, and taught them with the briers and thorns of the wilderness, and beat down the tower of Penuel,*

(he brought down their pride, and their false confidence) *and slew the men of the city*, Judg. viii. This, in all probability, Gideon did, as moved and directed by the Angel of the Lord, that is, Christ, that first called him, and sent him forth in this battle, and instructed and directed him in the whole affair.

The return of the ark of God to dwell in Zion, in the midst of the land of Israel, after it had been long absent, first in the land of the Philistines, and then in Kirjath-jearim, in the utmost borders of the land, did livelily represent the return of God to a professing people, in the spiritual tokens of his presence, after long absence from them; as well as the ark's ascending up into a mountain typified Christ's ascension into heaven. It is evident by the psalms that were penned on that occasion, especially the sixty-eighth psalm, that the exceeding rejoicings of Israel, on that occasion, represented the joy of the church of Christ, on his returning to it, after it has been in a low and dark state, to revive his work, bringing his people back, as it were, *from Bashan, and from the depth of the sea*, scattering their spiritual enemies, and causing that *though they had lien among the pots, yet they should be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver; and her feathers with yellow gold;* and giving the blessed tokens of his presence in his house, that his people may *see the goings of God their King in his sanctuary;* and that the gifts which David, with such royal bounty, distributed amongst the people on that occasion, (2 Sam. vi. 18, 19, and 1 Chron. xvi. 2, 3.) represent spiritual blessings, that Christ liberally sends down on his church, by the outpourings of his Spirit. See Psalm lxviii. 1, 8, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. And we have an account how that all the people, from Shihor, of Egypt, even unto the entering in of Hemath, gathered together, and appeared to join and assist in that great affair; and that all Israel "brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets,

and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps," 1 Chron. xiii. 2, 5, and xv. 28. And not only the men, but the women of Israel, the daughters of Zion, appeared as publicly joining in the praises and rejoicings that were on that occasion, 2 Sam. vi. 19. But we read of one of David's wives, even Michal, Saul's daughter, whose heart was not engaged in the affair, and did not appear with others to rejoice and praise God on this occasion, but kept away, and stood at a distance, as disaffected, and disliking the managements ; she despised and ridiculed the transports and extraordinary manifestations of joy that then were ; and the curse that she brought upon herself by it, was that of being barren to the day of her death. Let this be a warning to us ; let us take heed, in this day of the bringing up of the ark of God, that while we are in visibility and profession the spouse of the spiritual David, we do not show ourselves to be indeed the children of false hearted and rebellious Saul, by our standing aloof, and not joining in the joy and praises of the day, and disliking and despising the joys and affections of God's people, because they are to so high a degree, and so bring the curse of perpetual barrenness upon our souls.

Let us take heed that we be not like the son of the bondwoman, that was born after the flesh, that persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, and mocked at the feasting and rejoicings that were made for Isaac when he was weaned ; lest we should be cast out of the family of Abraham, as he was, Gen. xxi. 8, 9. That affair contained spiritual mysteries, and was typical of things that come to pass in these days of the gospel ; as is evident by the apostle's testimony, Gal. iv. 22. to the end. And particularly it seems to have been typical of two things. 1. The weaning of the church from its milk of carnal ordinances, ceremonies, shadows, and beggarly elements, upon the coming of Christ, and pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the apostles. The church of Christ, in the times of the Old Testament, was in its minority, and was a babe ; and

the apostle tells us that babes must be fed with milk, and not with strong meat; but when God weaned his church from these carnal ordinances, on the ceasing of the legal dispensation, a glorious gospel feast was provided for souls, and God fed his people with spiritual dainties, and filled them with the Spirit, and gave them joy in the Holy Ghost. Ishmael, in mocking at the time of Isaac's feast, by the apostle's testimony, represented the carnal Jews, the children of the literal Jerusalem, who when they beheld the rejoicings of Christians, in their spiritual and evangelical privileges, were filled with envy, deriding, contradicting and blaspheming. Acts ii. 13. and chap. xiii. 45. and xviii. 6. And therefore were cast out of the family of Abraham, and out of the land of Canaan, to wander through the earth. 2. This weaning of Isaac's seems also to represent the conversion of sinners, which is several times represented in scripture by the weaning of a child; as in Psalm cxxxi. and Isa. xxviii. 9. Because in conversion the soul is weaned from the enjoyments of the world, which are as it were the breast of our mother earth; and is also weaned from the covenant of our first parents, which we as naturally hang upon, as a child on its mother's breasts: and the great feast that Abraham made on that occasion represents the spiritual feast, the heavenly privileges, and holy joys and comforts, which God gives souls at their conversion. Now is a time when God is in a remarkable manner bestowing the blessings of such a feast. Let every one take heed that he does not show himself to be the son of the bond-woman, and born after the flesh, by standing and deriding, with mocking Ishmael; lest they be cast out as he was, and it be said concerning them, these sons of the bond-woman shall not be heirs with the sons of the free-woman. Do not let us stumble at the things that have been, because they are so great and extraordinary; for if we have run with the footmen, and they have wearied us, how shall we contend with horses? There is doubtless a time

coming when God will accomplish things vastly greater and more extraordinary than these.

And that we may be warned not to continue doubting and unbelieving concerning this work, because of the extraordinary degree of it, and the suddenness and swiftness of the accomplishment of the great things that pertain to it; let us consider the example of the unbelieving lord in Samaria, who could not believe so extraordinary a work of God to be accomplished so suddenly as was declared to him; the prophet Elisha foretold that the great famine in Samaria should very suddenly, even in one day, be turned into an extraordinary plenty; but the work was too great, and too sudden for him to believe; says he, *if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?* And the curse that he brought upon himself by it, was that he saw it with his eyes, and did not eat thereof, but miserably perished, and was trodden down as the mire of the streets, when others were feasting and rejoicing. 2 Kings, chap. vii.

When God redeemed his people from their Babylonish captivity, and they rebuilt Jerusalem, it was, as universally owned, a remarkable type of the spiritual redemption of God's church; and particularly, was an eminent type of the great deliverance of the Christian church from spiritual Babylon, and their rebuilding the spiritual Jerusalem, in the latter days; and therefore they are often spoken of under one by the prophets; and this probably was the main reason that it was so ordered in providence, and particularly noted in scripture, that the children of Israel, on that occasion, kept the greatest *feast of tabernacles* that ever had been kept in Israel, since the days of Joshua, when the people were first settled in Canaan (Neh. viii. 16, 17.); because at that time happened that restoration of Israel, that had the greatest resemblance of that great restoration of the church of God, of which the *feast of tabernacles* was the type, of any that had been since Joshua first brought the people out

of the wilderness, and settled them in the good land. But we read of some that opposed the Jews in that affair, and weakened their hands, and ridiculed God's people, and the instruments that were improved in that work, and despised their hope, and made as though their confidence was little more than a shadow, and would utterly fail them: "What do these feeble Jews? (say they) Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burnt? Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone-wall." Let not us be in any measure like them, lest it be said to us, as Nehemiah said to them, Neh. ii. 20., "We his servants will arise and build; but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem." And lest we bring Nehemiah's imprecation upon us, chap. vi. 5., "Cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee; for they have provoked thee to anger, before the builders."

As persons will greatly expose themselves to the curse of God, by opposing, or standing at a distance, and keeping silence at such a time as this; so for persons to arise, and readily to acknowledge God, and honor him in such a work, and cheerfully and vigorously to exert themselves to promote it, will be to put themselves much in the way of the divine blessing. What a mark of honor does God put upon those in Israel, that willingly offered themselves, and came to the help of the Lord against the mighty, when the angel of the Lord led forth his armies, and they fought from heaven against Sisera? Judg. v. 2, 9, 14, 15, 17, 18. And what a great blessing is pronounced on Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, for her appearing on the Lord's side, and for what she did to promote this work? v. 24. Which was no less than the curse pronounced in the preceding verse, against Meroz, for lying still: *Blessed above women, shall Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent.* And what a blessing is pro-

nounced on those which shall have any hand in the destruction of Babylon, which was the head city of the kingdom of Satan, and of the enemies of the church of God? Psalm cxxxvii. 9. "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." What a particular and honorable notice is taken, in the records of God's word, of those that arose and appeared as David's helpers, to introduce him into the kingdom of Israel, in the 1 Chron. xii. The host of those that thus came to the help of the Lord, in that work of his, and glorious revolution in Israel, by which the kingdom of that great type of the Messiah was set up in Israel, is compared to the host of God, v. 22. "At that time, day by day, there came to David, to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God." And doubtless it was intended to be a type of that host of God, that shall appear with the spiritual David, as his helpers, when he shall come to set up his kingdom in the world; the same host that we read of, Rev. xix. 14. The Spirit of God then pronounced a special blessing on David's helpers, as those that were co-workers with God, v. 18. "Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, thine are we David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse; peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers, for thy God helpeth thee." So we may conclude that God will much more give his blessing to such as come to the help of the Lord, when he sets his own dear Son as King on his holy hill of Zion; and they shall be received by Christ, and he will put peculiar honor upon them, as David did on those his helpers: as we have an account, in the following words, v. 18. "Then David received them, and made them captains of the band." It is particularly noted of those that came to David to Hebron, ready armed to the war, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord, that "they were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do," v. 23. and 32. Herein they differed from the Phari-

sees and other Jews, that did not come to the help of the Lord, at the time that the great Son of David appeared to set up his kingdom in the world, whom Christ condemns. that they had not *understanding of those times*, Luke xii. 56. "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it, that ye do not discern these times?" So it always will be, when Christ remarkably appears on earth, on a design of setting up his kingdom here, there will be many that will not understand the times, nor what Israel ought to do, and so will not come to turn about the kingdom to David.

The favorable notice that God will take of such as appear to promote the work of God, at such a time as this, may also be argued from such a very particular notice being taken in the sacred records, of those that helped in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, upon the return from the Babylonish captivity. Nehem. iii.

SECTION IV.

Obligations of rulers, ministers, and all sorts, to promote this work.

At such a time as this, when God is setting his King on his holy hill of Zion, or establishing his dominion, or showing forth his regal glory from thence, he expects that his visible people, without exception, should openly appear to acknowledge him in such a work, and bow before him, and join with him. But especially does he expect this of civil rulers: God's eye is especially upon them, to see how they behave themselves on such an occasion. If a new king comes to the throne, when he comes from abroad, and enters into his kingdom, and makes his solemn entry into the

royal city, it is expected that all sorts should acknowledge him; but above all others is it expected that the great men and public officers of the nation should then make their appearance, and attend on their sovereign, with suitable congratulations, and manifestations of respect and loyalty: if such as these stand at a distance, at such a time, it will be much more taken notice of, and will awaken the prince's jealousy and displeasure much more, than such a behavior in the common people. And thus it is, when that eternal Son of God, and heir of the world, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice, whom his Father has appointed to be King of kings, comes as it were from afar, and in the spiritual tokens of his presence, enters into the royal city Zion; God has his eye at such a time, especially upon those princes, nobles, and judges of the earth, spoken of, Prov. viii. 16., to see how they behave themselves, whether they bow to him, that he has made the head of all principality and power. This is evident by Psalm ii. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12. "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." There seems to be in the words an allusion to a new king's coming to the throne, and making his solemn entry into the royal city; (as Zion was the royal city in Israel;) when it is expected that all, especially men in public office and authority, should manifest their loyalty by some open and visible token of respect, *by the way*, as he passes along; and those that refuse or neglect it are in danger of being immediately struck down, and perishing *from the way*, by which the king goes in solemn procession.

The day wherein God does in an eminent manner send forth the rod of Christ's strength out of Zion, that he may

rule in the midst of his enemies, the day of his power wherein his people shall be made willing, is also eminently a day of his wrath, especially to such rulers as oppose him, or will not bow to him; a day wherein he "shall strike through kings, and fill the places with the dead bodies, and wound the heads over many countries." Psalm cx. And thus it is, that when the Son of God *girds his sword upon his thigh, with his glory and his majesty, and in his majesty rides prosperously, because of truth, meekness, and righteousness, his right hand teaches him terrible things.* It was the princes of Succoth especially, that suffered punishment, when the inhabitants of that city refused to come to the help of the Lord, when Gideon was pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna; we read that Gideon took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness, and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. It is especially taken notice of that the rulers and chief men of Israel, were called upon to assist in the affair of bringing up the ark of God; they were chiefly consulted, and were principal in the management of the affair. 1 Chron. xiii. 1. "And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader." And xv. 35. "So David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the house of Obed-edom, with joy." So 2 Sam. vi. 1. And so it was when the ark was brought into the temple, 1 Kings viii. 1, 3. and 2 Chron. v. 2, 4.

And as rulers, by neglecting their duty at such a time, will especially expose themselves to God's great displeasure, so by fully acknowledging God in such a work, and by cheerfully and vigorously exerting themselves to promote it, they will especially be in the way of receiving peculiar honors and rewards at God's hands. It is noted of the princes of Israel, that they especially appeared to honor God with their princely offering, on occasion of the setting up the tabernacle of God in the congregation of Israel (which I have observed already

was done at the time of the feast of tabernacles, and was a type of the tabernacle of God's being with men, and his dwelling with men in the latter days). And with what abundant particularity is it noted of each prince how much he offered to God on that occasion, for their everlasting honor, in Num. vii.? And so with how much favor and honor does the Spirit of God take notice of those princes in Israel that came to the help of the Lord in the war against Sisera? Judg. v. 9. "My heart is towards the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people." And v. 14. "Out of Machir came down governors." v. 15. "And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah." And in the account that we have of the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, in Nehem. iii., it is particularly noted what a hand one and another of the rulers had in this affair; we have an account that such a part of the wall was repaired by the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, and such a part by the ruler of the other half part of Jerusalem, and such a part by the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem, and such a part by the ruler of part of Mizpah, and such a part by the ruler of the half part of Bethzur, and such a part by the ruler of Mizpah, v. 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19. And there it is particularly noted of the rulers of one of the cities, that they put not their necks to the work of the Lord, though the common people did; and they are stigmatized for it in the sacred records, to their everlasting reproach, v. 5. "And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord." So the Spirit of God, with special honor, takes notice of princes and rulers of several tribes, that assisted in bringing up the ark, Psalm lxviii. 27.

And I humbly desire that it may be considered whether we have not reason to fear that God is provoked with this land, that no more notice has been taken of this glorious work of the Lord, that has been lately carried on, by the civil authority; that there has no more been done by them, as a public acknowledgment of God in this work, and no more

improvement of their authority to promote it, either by appointing a day of public thanksgiving to God, for so unspeakable a mercy, or a day of fasting and prayer, to humble ourselves before God, for our past deadness and unprofitableness under the means of grace, and to seek the continuance and increase of the tokens of his presence ; or so much as to enter upon any public consultation, what should be done to advance the present revival of religion, and great reformation that is begun in the land. Is there not danger that such a behavior, at such a time, will be interpreted by God, as a denial of Christ ? If but a new governor comes into a province, how much is there done, especially by those that are in authority, to put honor upon him, to arise, and appear publicly, and go forth to meet him, to address and congratulate him, and with great expense to attend upon him, and aid him ? If the authority of the province, on such an occasion, should all sit still, and say and do nothing, and take no notice of the arrival of their new governor, would there not be danger of its being interpreted by him, and his prince that sent him, as a denial of his authority, or a refusing to receive him, and honor him as their governor ? And shall the head of the angels, and Lord of the universe, come down from heaven, in so wonderful a manner, into the land, and shall all stand at a distance, and be silent and inactive on such an occasion ? I would humbly recommend it to our rulers, to consider whether God does not say to them, *be wise now ye rulers, be instructed ye judges of New England ; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.*

It is prophesied, Zech. xii. 8., that in the glorious day of the Christian church, the house of David, or the rulers in God's *Israel, shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord, before his people.* But how can such rulers expect to have any share in this glorious promise, that do not so much as openly acknowledge God in the work of that Spirit, by which the glory of that day is to be accomplished ? The

days are coming, so often spoken of, when the saints shall reign on earth, and all dominion and authority shall be given into their hands: but if our rulers would partake of this honor, they ought, at such a day as this, to bring their glory and honor into the spiritual Jerusalem, agreeable to Rev. xxi. 24.

But above all others, is God's eye upon ministers of the gospel, as expecting of them that they should arise and acknowledge and honor him in such a work as this, and do their utmost to encourage and promote it: for to promote such a work, is the very business which they are called and devoted to; it is the office to which they are appointed, as co-workers with Christ, and as his embassadors and instruments, to awaken and convert sinners, and establish, build up, and comfort saints; it is the business they have been solemnly charged with, before God, angels, and men, and that they have given up themselves to, by the most sacred vows. These especially are the officers of Christ's kingdom, that above all other men upon earth, do represent his person, into whose hands Christ has committed the sacred oracles, and holy ordinances, and all his appointed means of grace, to be administered by them; they are the stewards of his household, into whose hands he has committed its provision; the immortal souls of men are committed to them, as a flock of sheep are committed to the care of a shepherd, or as a master commits a treasure to the care of a servant, of which he must give an account: it is expected of them, above all others, that they should have understanding of the times, and know what Israel ought to do; for it is their business to acquaint themselves with things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and to teach and enlighten others in things of this nature. We that are employed in the sacred work of the gospel ministry, are the watchmen over the city, to whom God has committed the keys of the gates of Zion; and if when the rightful King of Zion comes to deliver his people from the enemy that oppresses them, we refuse to open the

gates to him, how greatly shall we expose ourselves to his wrath? We are appointed to be the captains of the host in this war; and if a general will highly resent it in a private soldier, if he refuses to follow him when his banner is displayed, and his trumpet blown, how much more will he resent it in the officers of his army? The work of the gospel ministry, consisting in the administration of God's word and ordinances, is the principal means that God has appointed for carrying on his work on the souls of men; and it is his revealed will, that whenever that glorious revival of religion and reformation of the world, so often spoken of in his word, is accomplished, it should be principally by the labors of his ministers; and therefore how heinous will it be in the sight of God, if when a work of that nature is begun, we appear unbelieving, slow, backward, and disaffected? There was no sort of persons among the Jews that was in any measure treated with such manifestations of God's great displeasure, and severe indignation, for not acknowledging Christ, and the work of his Spirit, in the days of Christ and his apostles, as the ministers of religion: see how Christ deals with them for it, in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew; with what gentleness did Christ treat publicans and harlots, in comparison of them?

When the tabernacle was erected in the camp of Israel, and God came down from heaven to dwell in it, the priests were, above all others, concerned and busily employed in the solemn transactions of that occasion, Levit. viii. and ix. And so it was at the time of the dedication of the temple of Solomon, 1 Kings viii., and 2 Chron. v. and vi. and vii., which was at the time of the feast of tabernacles, at the same time that the tabernacle was erected in the wilderness: and the Levites were primarily and most immediately concerned in bringing up the ark into mount Zion; the business properly belonged to them, and the ark was carried upon their shoulders. 1 Chron. xv. 2. "Then David said, none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them

hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever." And v. 11, 12. "And David called for Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Aminadab, and said unto them, ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it." So we have an account that the priests led the way in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, after the Babylonish captivity, Neh. iii., at the beginning.

If ministers preach never so good doctrine, and are never so painful and laborious in their work, yet, if at such a day as this, they show to their people, that they are not well affected to this work, but are very doubtful and suspicious of it, they will be very likely to do their people a great deal more hurt than good: for the very fame of such a great and extraordinary work of God, if their people were suffered to believe it to be his work, and the example of other towns, together with what preaching they might hear occasionally, would be likely to have a much greater influence upon the minds of their people, to awaken them and animate them in religion, than all their labors with them: and besides their minster's opinion would not only beget in them a suspicion of the work they hear of abroad, whereby the mighty hand of God that appears in it, loses its influence upon their minds, but it will also tend to create a suspicion of every thing of the like nature, that shall appear among themselves, as being something of the same distemper that is become so epidemical in the land; and that is, in effect, to create a suspicion of all vital religion, and to put the people upon talking against it, and discouraging it, wherever it appears, and knocking it in the head, as fast as it rises. And we that are ministers, by looking on this work, from year to year, with a displeased countenance, shall effectually keep the sheep from their pasture, instead of doing the part of shepherds to them, by feeding

them; and our people had a great deal better be without any settled minister at all, at such a day as this.

We that are in this sacred office, had need to take heed what we do, and how we behave ourselves at this time: a less thing in a minister will hinder the work of God, than in others. If we are very silent, or say but little about the work, in our public prayers and preaching, or seem carefully to avoid speaking of it in our conversation, it will, and justly may be interpreted by our people, that we who are their guides, to whom they are to have their eye for spiritual instruction, are suspicious of it; and this will tend to raise the same suspicions in them; and so the fore-mentioned consequences will follow. And if we really hinder, and stand in the way of the work of God, whose business above all others it is to promote it, how can we expect to partake of the glorious benefits of it? And by keeping others from the benefit of it, we shall keep them out of heaven; therefore those awful words of Christ to the Jewish teachers should be considered by us, Mat. xxiii. 13. "Wo unto you, for you shut up the kingdom of heaven; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in." If we keep the sheep from their pasture, how shall we answer it to the great Shepherd, that has bought the flock with his precious blood, and has committed the care of them to us? I would humbly desire of every minister that has thus long remained disaffected to this work, and has had contemptible thoughts of it, to consider whether he has not hitherto been like Michal without any child, or at least in a great measure barren and unsuccessful in his work: I pray God it may not be a perpetual barrenness as hers was.

The times of Christ's remarkably appearing in behalf of his church, and to revive religion, and advance his kingdom in the world, are often spoken of in the prophecies of scripture, as times wherein he will remarkably execute judgments on such ministers or shepherds, as do not feed the flock, but hinder their being fed, and so deliver his flock from them, as

Jer. xxiii. throughout, and Ezek. xxxiv. throughout, and Zech. x. 3, and Isa. lvi. 7, 8, 9, &c. I observed before, that Christ's solemn, magnificent, entry into Jerusalem, seems to be designed as a representation of his glorious coming into his church, the spiritual Jerusalem; and therefore it is worthy to be noted, to our present purpose, that Christ at that time, cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; signifying that when he should come to set up his kingdom on earth, he would cast out those out of his house, who, instead of being faithful ministers, officiated there only for worldly gain; not that I determine that all ministers that are suspicious of this work, do so; but I mention these things to show that it is to be expected, that a time of a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God to revive religion, will be a time of remarkable judgments on those ministers that do not serve the end of their ministry.

The example of the unbelieving lord in Samaria, should especially be for the warning of ministers and rulers. At the time when God turned an extreme famine into a great plenty, by a wonderful work of his, the king appointed this lord to have the charge of the gate of the city; where he saw the common people, in multitudes, entering with great joy and gladness, loaden with provision, to feed and feast their almost famished bodies; but he himself, though he saw it with his eyes, never had one taste of it, but being weak with famine, sunk down in the crowd, and was trodden to death, as a punishment of God, for his not giving credit to that great and wonderful work of God, when sufficiently manifested to him, to require his belief. Ministers are those that the King of the church has appointed to have the charge of the gate, at which his people enter into the kingdom of heaven, there to be entertained and satisfied with an eternal feast; ministers have the charge of the house of God, which is the gate of heaven.

Ministers should especially take heed of a spirit of envy towards other ministers, that God is pleased to make more use of to carry on this work, than they; and that they do not, from such a spirit, reproach some preachers, that have the true spirit, as though they were influenced by a false spirit or were bereft of reason, and were mad, and were proud, false pretenders, and deserved to be put in prison, or the stocks, as disturbers of the peace; lest they expose themselves to the curse of Shemaiah, the Nehelamite, who envied the prophet Jeremiah, and in this manner reviled him, in his letter to Zephaniah the priest, Jer. xxix. 26, 27. "The Lord hath made thee priest, in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the Lord, for every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldst put him in prison, and in the stocks. Now therefore, why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?" His curse is denounced in v. 32. "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed; he shall not have a man to dwell among his people, neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the Lord, because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord." All those that are others' superiors or elders, should take heed that at this day they be not like the elder brother, who could not bear it, that the prodigal should be made so much of, and should be so sumptuously entertained, and would not join in the joy of the feast: was like Michal, Saul's daughter, offended at the music and dancing that he heard; the transports of joy displeased him; it seemed to him to be an unseemly and unseasonable noise and ado, that was made; and therefore stood at a distance, sullen, and much offended, and full of invectives against the young prodigal.

It is our wisest and best way, fully, and without reluctance, to bow to the great God in this work, and to be entirely resigned to him, with respect to the manner in which

he carries it on, and the instruments he is pleased to make use of, and not to show ourselves out of humor, and sullenly to refuse to acknowledge the work, in the full glory of it, because we have not had so great a hand in promoting it, or have not shared so largely in the blessings of it, as some others; and not to refuse to give all that honor that belongs to others, as instruments, because they are young, or are upon other accounts much inferior to ourselves, and many others, and may appear to us very unworthy, that God should put so much honor upon them. When God comes to accomplish any great work for his church, and for the advancement of the kingdom of his Son, he always fulfills that scripture, Isa. ii. 17. "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." If God has a design of carrying on this work, every one, whether he be great or small, must either bow to it, or be broken before it. It may be expected that God's hand will be upon every thing that is high, and stiff, and strong in opposition, as in Isa. ii. 12, 13, 14, 15. "For the day of the Lord of hosts, shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall."

Not only magistrates and ministers, but every living soul, is now obliged to arise and acknowledge God in this work, and put to his hand to promote it, as they would not expose themselves to God's curse. All sorts of persons, throughout the whole congregation of Israel, great and small, rich and poor, men and women, helped to build the tabernacle in the wilderness; some in one way, others in another, each one according to his capacity: every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his Spirit made willing; all sorts contributed, and all sorts were employed in that affair, in la-

bors of their hands, both men and women: some brought gold and silver, others blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine linen; others offered an offering of brass; others, with whom was found shittim-wood, brought it an offering to the Lord: the rulers brought onyx-stones, and spice, and oil; and some brought goats' hair, and some rams' skins, and others badgers' skins. See Exod. xxxv. 20, &c. And we are told, v. 29., "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing." And thus it ought to be in this day of building the tabernacle of God; with such a willing and cheerful heart ought every man, woman, and child, to do something to promote this work: those that have not onyx-stone, or are not able to bring gold or silver, yet may bring goats' hair.

As all sorts of persons were employed in building the tabernacle in the wilderness, so the whole congregation of Israel were called together to set up the tabernacle in Shiloh, after they came into Canaan, Josh. xviii. 1. And so again the whole congregation of Israel were gathered together, to bring up the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim; and again, they were all assembled to bring it up out of the house of Obed-edom into mount Zion; so again, all Israel met together to assist in the great affair of the dedication of the temple, and bringing the ark into it: so we have an account how that all sorts assisted in the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, not only the proper inhabitants of Jerusalem, but those that dwelt in other parts of the land; not only the priests and rulers, but the Nethinims and merchants, husbandmen and mechanics, and women, Neh. iii. 5, 12, 26, 31, 32. And we have an account of one and another, that he repaired over against his house, v. 10, and 23, 28., and of one that repaired over against his chamber, v. 30. So now, at this time of the rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, every one ought to promote the work of God within his own sphere, and by doing what belongs to him, in the place in which God has set him: men in a private capacity may re-

pair over against their houses; and even those that have not the government of families, and have but part of a house belonging to them, should repair, each one, over against his chamber: and every one should be engaged to do the utmost that lies in his power, laboring with the utmost watchfulness, care, and diligence, with united hearts, and united strength, and the greatest readiness, to assist one another in this work: as God's people rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem, who were so diligent in the work that they wrought from break of day till the stars appeared, and did not so much as put off their clothes in the night, and wrought with that care and watchfulness, that with one hand they wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon, besides the guard they set to defend them, and were so well united in it, that they took care that one should stand ready, with a trumpet in his hand, that if any were assaulted in one part, those in the other parts, at the sound of the trumpet, might resort to them, and help them, Neh. iv., at the latter end.

Great care should be taken that the press should be improved to no purpose contrary to the interest of this work. We read that when God fought against Sisera, for the deliverance of his oppressed church, *they that handle the pen of the writer* came to the help of the Lord in that affair, Judg. v. 14. Whatever sort of men in Israel they were that were intended, yet as the words were indited by a Spirit that had a perfect view of all events to the end of the world, and had a special eye in this song, to that great event of the deliverance of God's church, in the latter days, of which this deliverance of Israel was a type, it is not unlikely that they have respect to authors, those that should fight against the kingdom of Satan, with their pens. Those therefore that publish pamphlets to the disadvantage of this work, and tending either directly or indirectly to bring it under suspicion, and to discourage or hinder it, would do well thoroughly to consider whether this be not indeed the work of God, and whether, if it be, it is not likely that God will go forth as

fire, to consume all that stands in his way, and so burn up those pamphlets; and whether there be not danger that the fire that is kindled in them, will scorch the authors.

When a people oppose Christ in the work of his Holy Spirit, it is because it touches them in something that is dear to their carnal minds, and because they see the tendency of it is to cross their pride, and deprive them of the objects of their lusts. We should take heed that at this day we be not like the Gadarenes, who, when Christ came into their country in the exercise of his glorious power and grace, triumphing over a legion of devils, and delivering a miserable creature, that had long been their captive, were all alarmed, because they lost their swine by it, and the whole multitude of the country came and besought him to depart out of their coasts: they loved their filthy swine better than Jesus Christ, and had rather have a legion of devils in their country, with their herd of swine, than Jesus Christ without them.

This work may be opposed, not only by directly speaking against the whole of it: persons may say that they believe there is a good work carried on in the country, and may sometimes bless God, in their public prayers, in general terms, for any awakenings or revivals of religion there have lately been in any part of the land, and may pray that God would carry on his own work, and pour out his Spirit more and more; and yet, as I apprehend, be in the sight of God great opposers of his work: some will express themselves after this manner, that are so far from acknowledging and rejoicing in the infinite mercy and glorious grace of God, in causing so happy a change in the land, that they look upon the religious state of the country, take it in the whole of it, much more sorrowful than it was ten years ago, and whose conversation, to those that are well acquainted with them, evidently shows that they are more out of humor with the state of things, and enjoy themselves less, than they did before ever this work began. If it be manifestly thus with us, and our talk and behavior with

respect to this work be such as has (though but) an indirect tendency to beget ill thoughts and suspicions in others concerning it, we are opposers of the work of God.

Instead of coming to the help of the Lord, we shall actually fight against him, if we are abundant in insisting on and setting forth the blemishes of the work, so as to manifest that we rather choose, and are more forward to take notice of what is amiss, than what is good and glorious in the work. Not but that the errors that are committed, ought to be observed and lamented, and a proper testimony borne against them, and the most probable means should be used to have them amended ; but an insisting much upon them, as though it were a pleasing theme, or speaking of them with more appearance of heat of spirit, or with ridicule, or an air of contempt, than grief for them, has no tendency to correct the errors, but has a tendency to darken the glory of God's power and grace, appearing in the substance of the work, and to beget jealousies and ill thoughts in the minds of others concerning the whole of it. Whatever errors many zealous persons have run into, yet if the work, in the substance of it, be the work of God, then it is a joyful day indeed ; it is so in heaven, and ought to be so among God's people on earth, especially in that part of the earth where this glorious work is carried on. It is a day of great rejoicing with Christ himself : the good Shepherd, when he finds his sheep that was lost, lays it on his shoulders rejoicing, and calls together his friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me : if we therefore are Christ's friends, now it should be a day of great rejoicing with us. If we viewed things in a just light, so great an event as the conversion of such a multitude of sinners, would draw and engage our attention much more than all the imprudencies and irregularities that have been ; our hearts would be swallowed up with the glory of this event, and we should have no great disposition to attend to any thing else. The imprudencies and errors of poor feeble worms, do not hinder or prevent great rejoicing, in the presence of the angels of God, over so many poor sinners that

have repented, and it will be an argument of something very ill in us, if they prevent our rejoicing.

Who loves, in a day of great joy and gladness, to be much insisting on those things that are uncomfortable? Would it not be very improper, on a king's coronation day, to be much in taking notice of the blemishes of the royal family? Or would it be agreeable to the bridegroom, on the day of his espousals, the day of the gladness of his heart, to be much insisting on the blemishes of his bride? We have an account how that, at the time of that joyful dispensation of Providence, the restoration of the church of Israel after the Babylonish captivity, and at the time of the feast of tabernacles, many wept at the faults that were found amongst the people, but were reproved for taking so much notice of the blemishes of that affair, as to overlook the cause of rejoicing. Neh. viii. 9, 10, 11, 12. "And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest, the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not nor weep; for all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be you sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, hold your peace, for the day is holy, neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way, to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them."

God doubtless now expects that all sorts of persons in New England, rulers, ministers and people, high and low, rich and poor, old and young, should take great notice of his hand in this mighty work of his grace, and should appear to acknowledge his glory in it, and greatly to rejoice in it, every one doing his utmost, in the place that God has set them in, to promote it. And God, according to his wonder-

ful patience, seems to be still waiting to give us opportunity thus to acknowledge and honor him. But if we finally refuse, there is not the least reason to expect any other, than that his awful curse will pursue us, and that the pourings out of his wrath will be proportionable to the despised outpourings of his Spirit and grace.

THOUGHTS ON THE REVIVAL, &c.

PART III.

SHOWING, IN MANY INSTANCES, WHEREIN THE SUBJECTS, OR ZEALOUS PROMOTERS OF THIS WORK, HAVE BEEN INJURIOUSLY BLAMED.

THIS work that has lately been carried on in the land, is the work of God, and not the work of man. Its beginning has not been of man's power or device, and its being carried on depends not on our strength or wisdom; but yet God expects of all, that they should use their utmost endeavors to promote it, and that the hearts of all should be greatly engaged in this affair, and that we should improve our utmost strength in it, however vain human strength is without the power of God; and so he no less requires that we should improve our utmost care, wisdom, and prudence, though human wisdom, of itself, be as vain as human strength. Though God is wont to carry on such a work, in such a manner, as many ways to show the weakness and vanity of means and human endeavors in themselves, yet at the same time he carries it on in such a manner as to encourage diligence and vigilance in the use of proper means and endeavors, and to punish the neglect of them. Therefore, in our endeavors to promote this great work, we ought to use the utmost caution, vigilance, and skill, in the measures we take in order to it. A great affair should be managed with great prudence: this is the most important affair that ever New England was called to be concerned in. When a people are engaged in war

with a powerful and crafty nation, it concerns them to manage an affair of such consequence with the utmost discretion. Of what vast importance then must it be, that we should be vigilant and prudent in the management of this great war that New England now has, with so great a host of such subtle and cruel enemies, wherein we must either conquer or be conquered, and the consequence of the victory on one side, will be our eternal destruction, in both soul and body in hell, and on the other side, our obtaining the kingdom of heaven, and reigning in it in eternal glory? We had need always to stand on our watch, and to be well versed in the art of war, and not to be ignorant of the devices of our enemies, and to take heed lest by any means we be beguiled through their subtlety.

Though the devil be strong, yet in such a war as this, he depends more on his craft than his strength: and the course he has chiefly taken, from time to time, to clog, hinder, and overthrow revivals of religion in the church of God, has been by his subtle, deceitful management, to beguile and mislead those that have been engaged therein; and in such a course God has been pleased, in his holy and sovereign providence, to suffer him to succeed, oftentimes, in a great measure, to overthrow that which, in its beginning, appeared most hopeful and glorious. The work that is now begun in New England, is, as I have shown, eminently glorious, and if it should go on and prevail, would make New England a kind of heaven upon earth: is it not, therefore, a thousand pities, that it should be overthrown, through wrong and improper management, that we are led into by our subtle adversary, in our endeavors to promote it?

In treating of the methods that ought to be taken to promote this work, I would,

First, Take notice, in some instances, wherein fault has been found with the conduct of those that have appeared to be the subjects of it, or have been zealous to promote it (as I apprehend) beyond just cause.

Secondly, I would show what things ought to be corrected or avoided.

Thirdly, I would show positively what ought to be done to promote this glorious work of God.

I. I would take notice of some things at which offense has been taken without, or beyond just cause.

SECTION I.

The objection that ministers address themselves to the affections, rather than the understanding.

One thing that has been complained of, is ministers' addressing themselves rather to the affections of their hearers, than to their understandings, and striving to raise their passions to the utmost height, rather by a very affectionate manner of speaking, and a great appearance of earnestness, in voice and gesture, than by clear reasoning, and informing their judgment; by which means it is objected that the affections are moved without a proportionable enlightening of the understanding.

To which I would say, I am far from thinking that it is not very profitable for ministers, in their preaching, to endeavor clearly and distinctly to explain the doctrines of religion, and unravel the difficulties that attend them, and to confirm them with strength of reason and argumentation, and also to observe some easy and clear method and order in their discourses, for the help of the understanding and memory; and it is very probable that these things have been of late too much neglected by many ministers; yet I believe that the objection that is made, of affections raised without enlightening the understanding, is in a great measure built on a mistake, and confused notions that some have about the nature and cause of the affections, and the manner in

which they depend on the understanding. All affections are raised either by light *in the understanding*, or by some error and delusion *in the understanding ;* for all affections do certainly arise from some apprehension in the understanding, and that apprehension must either be agreeble to truth, or else be some mistake or delusion ; if it be an apprehension or notion that it is agreeable to truth, then it is *light in the understanding*. Therefore the thing to be inquired into is, whether the apprehensions or notions of divine and eternal things, that are raised in people's minds by these affectionate preachers, whence their affections are excited, be apprehensions that are agreeable to truth, or whether they are mistakes. If the former, then the affections are raised the way they should be, viz. by informing the mind, or conveying light to the understanding. They go away with a wrong notion, that think that those preachers cannot affect their hearers by enlightening their understanding, that do not do it by such a distinct and learned handling of the doctrinal points of religion as depends on human discipline, or the strength of natural reason, and tends to enlarge their hearers' learning and speculative knowledge in divinity. The manner of preaching without this may be such as shall tend very much to set divine and eternal things in a right view, and to give the hearers such ideas and apprehensions of them as are agreeable to truth, and such impressions on their hearts as are answerable to the real nature of things : and not only the words that are spoken, but the manner of speaking, is one thing that has a great tendency to this. I think an exceeding affectionate way of preaching about the great things of religion, has in itself no tendency to beget false apprehensions of them ; but on the contrary, a much greater tendency to beget true apprehensions of them, than a moderate, dull, indifferent way of speaking of them. An appearance of affection and earnestness in the manner of delivery, if it be very great indeed, yet if it be agreeable to the nature of the subject, and be not beyond a proportion to

its importance and worthiness of affection, and there be no appearance of its being feigned or forced, has so much the greater tendency to beget true ideas or apprehensions in the minds of the hearers of the subject spoken of, and so to enlighten the understanding; and that for this reason, that such a way or manner of speaking of these things does in fact more truly represent them, than a more cold and indifferent way of speaking of them. If the subject be in its own nature worthy of very great affection, then a speaking of it with very great affection is most agreeable to the nature of that subject, or is the truest representation of it, and therefore has most of a tendency to beget true ideas of it in the minds of those to whom the representation is made. And I do not think ministers are to be blamed for raising the affections of their hearers too high, if that which they are affected with be only that which is worthy of affection, and their affections are not raised beyond a proportion to their importance or worthiness of affection. I should think myself in the way of my duty to raise the affections of my hearers as high as possibly I can, provided that they are affected with nothing but truth, and with affections that are not disagreeable to the nature of what they are affected with. I know it has long been fashionable to despise a very earnest and pathetical way of preaching; and they, and they only, have been valued as preachers, that have shown the greatest extent of learning, and strength of reason, and correctness of method and language: but I humbly conceive it has been for want of understanding, or duly considering human nature, that such preaching has been thought to have the greatest tendency to answer the ends of preaching; and the experience of the present and past ages abundantly confirms the same. Though, as I said before, clearness of distinction and illustration, and strength of reason, and a good method, in the doctrinal handling of the truths of religion, is many ways needful and profitable, and not to be neglected, yet an increase in speculative knowledge in divinity, is not what is

so much needed by our people, as something else. Men may abound in this sort of light, and have no heat. How much has there been of this sort of knowledge, in the Christian world, in this age! Was there ever an age wherein strength and penetration of reason, extent of learning, exactness of distinction, correctness of style, and clearness of expression, did so abound? And yet was there ever an age wherein there has been so little sense of the evil of sin, so little love to God, heavenly mindedness, and holiness of life, among the professors of the true religion? Our people do not so much need to have their heads stored, as to have their hearts touched; and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of preaching that has the greatest tendency to do this.

Those texts, Isa. lviii. 1. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." And Ezek. vi. 11. "Thus saith the Lord God, Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas, for all the evil abomination of the house of Israel!" I say these texts (however the use that some have made of them has been laughed at) will fully justify a great degree of *pathos*, and manifestation of zeal and fervency in preaching the word of God: they may indeed be abused, to justify that which would be odd and unnatural, amongst us, not making due allowance for difference of manners and custom, in different ages and nations; but let us interpret them how we will, they at least imply, that a most affectionate and earnest manner of delivery, in many cases, becomes a preacher of God's word.

Preaching of the word of God is commonly spoken of in scripture in such expressions as seem to import a loud and earnest speaking; as in Isa. xl. 2. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her iniquity is pardoned." And v. 3. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord." v. 7. "The voice said cry. And he said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof, as the flower of the field." Jer.

ii. 2. "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, &c." Jonah i. 2. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it." Isa. lxi. 1, 2. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me, to preach good tidings to the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the year of vengeance of our God." Isa. lxii. 11. "Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy slavation cometh, &c." Rom. x. 18. "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Jer. xi. 6. "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them." So chap. xix. 2. and vii. 2. Prov. viii. 1. "Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice?" v. 3, 4. "She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors; unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men?" And chap. i. 20. "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets." chap. ix. 3. "She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the high places of the city." John vii. 37. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

It seems to be foretold, that the gospel should be especially preached in a loud and earnest manner, at the introduction of the prosperous state of religion, in the latter days. Isa. xl. 9. "O Zion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain! O Jerusalem, that bringeth good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength! lift up and be not afraid! Say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God!" Isa. lii. 7, 8. "How beautiful upon the mountains, are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice." Isa. xxvii. 13. "And it shall come to pass, in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish." And this will be one

way, that the church of God will cry at that time, like a travailing woman, when Christ mystical is going to be brought forth; as Rev. 12. at the beginning. It will be by ministers, that are her mouth: and it will be this way that Christ will then cry, like a travailing woman, as in Isa. xlii. 14. "I have long time holden my peace: I have been still and refrained myself; now will I cry, like a travailing woman." Christ cries by his ministers, and the church cries by her officers. And it is worthy to be noted, that the word commonly used in the new testament, that we translate *preach*, properly signifies to *proclaim aloud like a crier*.

SECTION II.

Ministers blamed for speaking terror to those who are already under great terrors.

Another thing that some ministers have been greatly blamed for, and I think unjustly, is speaking terror to them that are already under great terrors, instead of comforting them. Indeed, if ministers in such a case go about to terrify persons with that which is not true, or to affright them by representing their case worse than it is, or in any respect otherwise than it is, they are to the condemned; but if they terrify them only by still holding forth more light to them, and giving them to understand more of the truth of their case, they are altogether to be justified. When sinners' consciences are greatly awakened by the Spirit of God, it is by light imparted to the conscience, enabling them to see their case to be, in some measare, as it is; and if more light be let in, it will terrify them still more: but ministers are not therefore to be blamed that they endeavor to hold forth more light to the conscience, and do not rather alleviate the pain they are under, by intercepting and obstructing that light

that shines already. To say anything to those who have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, to represent their case any otherwise than exceeding terrible, is not to preach the word of God to them; for the word of God reveals nothing but truth, but this is to delude them. Why should we be afraid to let persons that are in an infinitely miserable condition, know the truth, or bring them into the light, for fear it should terrify them? It is light that must convert them, if ever they are converted. The more we bring sinners into the light, while they are miserable, and the light is terrible to them, the more likely it is, that by and by the light will be joyful to them. The ease, peace, and comfort, that natural men enjoy, have their foundation in darkness and blindness; therefore as that darkness vanishes, and light comes in, their peace vanishes, and they are terrified: but that is no good argument why we should endeavor to hold their darkness, that we may uphold their comfort. The truth is, that as long as men reject Christ, and do not savingly believe in him, however they may be awakened, and however strict, and conscientious, and laborious they may be in religion, they have the wrath of God abiding on them, they are his enemies, and the children of the devil; (as the scripture calls all that be not savingly converted, Mat. xiii. 38. 1 John iii. 10.), and it is uncertain whether they shall ever obtain mercy: God is under no obligation to show them mercy, nor will he be if they fast and pray and cry never so much; and they are then especially provoking God under those terrors, that they stand it out against Christ, and will not accept of an offered Savior, though they see so much need of him: and seeing this is the truth, they should be told so, that they may be sensible what their case indeed is.

To blame a minister for thus declaring the truth to those who are under awakenings, and not immediately administering comfort to them, is like blaming a surgeon, because when he has begun to thrust in his lance, whereby he has already put his patient to great pain, and he shrinks and

cries out with anguish, he is so cruel that he will not stay his hand, but goes on to thrust it in further, till he comes to the core of the wound. Such a compassionate physician, who as soon as his patient began to flinch, should withdraw his hand, and go about immediately to apply a plaster, to skin over the wound, and leave the core untouched, would be one that would heal the hurt slightly, crying Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

Indeed something else besides terror is to be preached to them, whose consciences are awakened. The gospel is to be preached to them: they are to be told that there is a Savior provided, that is excellent and glorious, who has shed his precious blood for sinners, and is every way sufficient to save them, that stands ready to receive them, if they will heartily embrace him; for this is also the truth, as well as that they now are in an infinitely dreadful condition: this is the word of God. Sinners at the same time that they are told how miserable their case is, should be earnestly invited to come and accept of a Savior, and yield their hearts unto him, with all the winning, encouraging arguments, for them so to do, that the gospel affords: but this is to induce them to escape from the misery of the condition that they are now in: but not to make them think their present condition less miserable than it is, or at all to abate their uneasiness and distress, while they are in it: that would be the way to quiet them, and fasten them in it, and not to excite them to fly from it. Comfort, in one sense, is to be held forth, to sinners under awakenings of conscience, i. e. comfort is to be offered to them in Christ, on condition of their flying *from their present miserable state*, to him: but comfort is not to be administered to them, *in their present state*, as any thing that they have now any title to, or while out of Christ. No comfort is to be administered to them, from any thing *in them*, any of their qualifications, prayers, or other performances, past, present, or future; but ministers should, in such cases, strive to their utmost to take all such comforts from them, though it

greatly increases their terror. A person that sees himself ready to sink into hell, is ready to strive, some way or other, to lay God under some obligation to him; but he is to be beat off from every thing of that nature, though it greatly increases his terror to see himself wholly destitute, on every side, of any refuge, or any thing of his own to lay hold of; as a man that sees himself in danger of drowning, is in terror, and endeavors to catch hold on every twig within his reach, and he that pulls away those twigs from him, increases his terror; yet if they are insufficient to save him, and by being in his way, prevent his looking to that which will save him, to pull them away is necessary to save his life.

If sinners are in any distress, from any error that they embrace, or mistake they are under, that is to be removed: for instance, if they are in terror from an apprehension that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that those things have happened to them that are certain signs of reprobation, or any other delusion, such terrors have no tendency to do them any good; for these terrors are from temptation, and not from conviction: but that terror which arises from conviction, or a sight of truth, is to be increased; for those that are most awakened, have great remaining stupidity, they have a sense of but little of that which is; and it is from remaining blindness and darkness, that they see no more; and that remaining blindness is a disease, that we ought to endeavor to remove. I am not afraid to tell sinners, that are most sensible of their misery, that their case is indeed as miserable as they think it to be, and a thousand times more so; for this is the truth. Some may be ready to say that though it be the truth, yet the truth is not to be spoken at all times, and seems not to be seasonable then: but it seems to me, such truth is never more seasonable than at such a time, when Christ is beginning to open the eyes of conscience. Ministers ought to act as co-workers with him; to take that opportunity, and to the utmost to improve that advantage, and strike while the iron is hot, and when the light has be-

gun to shine, then to remove all obstacles, and use all proper means, that it may come in more fully, and the work be done thoroughly then. And experience abundantly shows, that to take this course, is not of a hurtful tendency, but very much the contrary: I have seen, in very many instances, the happy effects of it, and oftentimes a very speedy happy issue, and never knew any ill consequence, in case of real conviction, and when distress has been only from thence.

I know of but one case, wherein the truth ought to be withheld from sinners in distress of conscience, and that is the case of melancholy: and it is not to be withheld from them then, because the truth tends to do them hurt, but because if we speak the truth to them, sometimes they will be deceived, and led into error by it, through that strange disposition there is in them, to take things wrong. So that that which, as it is spoken, is truth; as it is heard and received, and applied by them, is falsehood; as it will be, unless the truth be spoken with abundance of caution and prudence, and consideration of their disposition and circumstances. But the most awful truths of God's word ought not to be withheld from public congregations, because it may happen that some such melancholic persons may be in it; any more than the Bible is to be withheld from the Christian world, because it is manifest that there are a great many melancholic persons in Christendom, that exceedingly abuse the awful things contained in the scripture, to their own wounding. Nor do I think that to be of weight, which is made use of by some, as a great and dreadful objection against the terrifying preaching that has of late been in New England, viz. that there have been some instances of melancholic persons that have so abused it, that the issue has been the murder of themselves. The objection from hence is no stronger against awakening preaching, than it is against the Bible itself. There are hundreds, and probably thousands of instances, might be produced, of persons that have murdered themselves, under religious melancholy: these murders probably

never would have been, if it had not been for the Bible, or if the world had remained in a state of heathenish darkness. The Bible has not only been the occasion of these sad effects, but of thousands, and I suppose millions, of other cruel murders, that have been committed, in the persecutions that have been raised, that never would have been, if it had not been for the Bible. Many whole countries have been, as it were, deluged with innocent blood, which would not have been, if the gospel never had been preached in the world. It is not a good objection against any kind of preaching, that some men abuse it greatly to their hurt. It has been acknowledged by all divines, as a thing common in all ages, and all Christian countries, that a very great part of those that sit under the gospel, do so abuse it, that it only proves an occasion of their far more aggravated damnation, and so of men's eternally murdering their souls; which is an effect infinitely more terrible than the murder of their bodies. It is as unjust to lay the blame of these self-murders to those ministers who have declared the awful truths of God's word, in the most lively and affecting manner they were capable of, as it would be to lay the blame of hardening men's hearts, and blinding their eyes, and their more dreadful eternal damnation, to the prophet Isaiah, or Jesus Christ, because this was the consequence of their preaching, with respect to many of their hearers. Isa. vi. 10. John ix. 39. Mat. xiii. 14. Though a very few have abused the awakening preaching that has lately been, to so sad an effect as to be the cause of their own temporal death; yet it may be, to one such instance, there have been hundreds, yea, thousands, that have been saved, by this means, from eternal death.

What has more especially given offense to many, and raised a loud cry against some preachers, as though their conduct were intolerable, is their frighting poor innocent children, with talk of hell-fire, and eternal damnation. But if those that complain so loudly of this, really believe, what is the general profession of the country, viz. that all

are by nature the children of wrath, and heirs of hell; and that every one that has not been born again, whether he be young or old, is exposed every moment to eternal destruction, under the wrath of Almighty God: I say, if they really believe this, then such a complaint and cry as this betrays a great deal of weakness and inconsideration. As innocent as children seem to be to us, yet, if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers, and are infinitely more hateful than vipers, and are in a most miserable condition, as well as grown persons; and they are naturally very senseless and stupid, being *born as the wild ass's colt*, and need much to awaken them. Why should we conceal the truth from them? Will those children that have been dealt tenderly with, in this respect, and lived and died insensible of their misery, till they come to feel it in hell, ever thank parents, and others, for their tenderness, in not letting them know what they were in danger of? If parents' love towards their children was not blind, it would affect them much more, to see their children every day exposed to eternal burnings, and yet senseless, than to see them suffer the distress of that awakening, that is necessary in order to their escape from them, and that tends to their being eternally happy, as the children of God. A child that has a dangerous wound, may need the painful lance, as well as grown persons; and that would be a foolish pity, in such a case, that should hold back the lance, and throw away the life. I have seen the happy effects of dealing plainly and thoroughly with children, in the concerns of their souls, without sparing them at all, in many instances; and never knew any ill consequence of it, in any one instance.

SECTION III.

The objection of having so frequent religious meetings, and spending so much time in religion.

Another thing, that a great deal has been said against, is having so frequent religious meetings, and spending so much time in religion. And indeed there are none of the externals of religion, but what are capable of excess: and I believe it is true, that there has not been a due proportion observed in religion of late. We have placed religion too much in the external duties of the first table; we have abounded in religious meetings, and in praying, reading, hearing, singing, and religious conference; and there has not been a proportionable increase of zeal for deeds of charity, and other duties of the second table; (though it must be acknowledged that they are also much increased.) But yet it appears to me, that this objection of persons' spending too much time in religion, has been in the general groundless. Though worldly business must be done, and persons ought not to neglect the business of their particular callings, yet it is to the honor of God, that a people should be so much in outward acts of religion, as to carry in it a visible, public appearance, of a great engagedness of mind in it, as the main business of life: and especially is it fit, that at such an extraordinary time, when God appears unusually present with a people, in wonderful works of power and mercy, that they should spend more time than usual in religious exercises, to put honor upon that God that is then extraordinarily present, and to seek his face; as it was with the Christian church in Jerusalem, on occasion of that extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit, soon after Christ's ascension. Acts ii. 46. "And they continued daily, with one accord, in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house." And so it was at Ephesus, at a time of

great outpouring of the Spirit there; the Christians there attended public religious exercises, every day for two years together. Acts xix. 8, 9, 10. "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God: but when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." And as to the grand objection of *six days shalt thou labor*, all that can be understood by it, and all that the very objectors themselves understand by it, is that we *may* follow our secular labors in those six days, that are not the sabbath, and *ought* to be diligent in them: not but that sometimes we may turn from them, even within those six days, to keep a day of fasting, or thanksgiving, or to attend a lecture; and that more frequently or rarely, as God's providence and the state of things shall call us, according to the best judgment of our discretion.

Though secular business, as I said before, ought not to be neglected, yet I cannot see how it can be maintained, that religion ought not to be attended, so as in the least to injure our temporal affairs, on any other principles than those of infidelity. No one objects against injuring one temporal affair for the sake of another temporal affair of much greater importance; and therefore, if eternal things are as real as temporal things, and are indeed of infinitely greater importance; then why may we not voluntarily suffer, in some measure, in our temporal concerns, while we are seeking eternal riches, and immortal glory? It is looked upon no way improper for a whole nation to spend considerable time, and much of their outward substance, on some extraordinary temporal occasions, for the sake only of the ceremonies of a public rejoicing; and it would be thought dishonorable to be very

exact about what we spend, or careful lest we injure our estates, on such an occasion: and why should we be exact only with Almighty God, so that it should be a crime to be otherwise than scrupulously careful, lest we injure ourselves in our temporal interest, to put honor upon him, and seek our own eternal happiness? We should take heed that none of us be in any wise like Judas, who greatly complained of needless expense, and waste of outward substance, to put honor upon Christ, when Mary broke her box, and poured the precious ointment on his head: he had indignation within himself on that account, and cries out, "Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor." Mark xiv. 3, 4, 5, &c., and John xii. 4, 5, &c.

And besides, if the matter be justly considered and examined, I believe it will be found, that the country has lost no time from their temporal affairs by the late revival of religion, but have rather gained time; and that more time has been saved from frolicking and tavern haunting, idleness, unprofitable visits, vain talk, fruitless pastimes, and needless diversions, than has lately been spent in extraordinary religion; and probably five times as much has been saved in persons' estates, at the tavern, and in their apparel, as has been spent by religious meetings.

The great complaint that is made against so much time spent in religion, cannot be in general from a real concern that God may be honored, and his will done, and the best good of men promoted; as is very manifest from this, that now there is a much more earnest and zealous outcry made in the country against this extraordinary religion, than was before against so much time spent in tavern haunting, vain company keeping, night walking, and other things which wasted both our time and substance, and injured our moral virtue.

The frequent preaching that has lately been, has in a particular manner been objected against as unprofitable and pre

judicial. It is objected that when sermons are heard so very often, one sermon tends to thrust out another; so that persons lose the benefit of all: they say two or three sermons in a week is as much as they can remember and digest. Such objections against frequent preaching, if they be not from an enmity against religion, are for want of duly considering the way that sermons usually profit an auditory. The main benefit that is obtained by preaching, is by impression made upon the mind in the time of it, and not by any effect that arises afterwards by a remembrance of what was delivered. And though an after remembrance of what was heard in a sermon, is oftentimes very profitable; yet, for the most part, that remembrance is from an impression the words made on the heart in the time of it; and the memory profits as it renews and increases that impression; and a frequent inculcating the more important things of religion in preaching, has no tendency to rase out such impressions, but to increase them, and fix them deeper and deeper in the mind, as is found by experience. It never used to be objected against, that persons, upon the sabbath, after they have heard two sermons that day, should go home, and spend the remaining part of the sabbath in reading the scriptures, and printed sermons; which, in proportion as it has a tendency to affect the mind at all, has as much of a tendency to drive out what they have heard, as if they heard another sermon preached. It seems to have been the practice of the apostles to preach every day in places where they went; yea, though sometimes they continued long in one place, Acts ii. 42 and 46. Acts xix. 8, 9, 10. They did not avoid preaching one day, for fear they should thrust out of the minds of their hearers what they had delivered the day before; nor did Christians avoid going every day to hear, for fear of any such bad effect, as is evident by Acts ii. 42, 46.

There are some things in scripture that seem to signify as much, as that there should be preaching in an extraordinary

frequency, at the time when God should be about to introduce that flourishing state of religion that should be in the latter days; as that in Isa. lxii. at the beginning: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest; until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth: and the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory." And ver. 5, 6. "For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night." The destruction of the city of Jericho, is evidently, in all its circumstances, intended by God as a great type of the overthrow of Satan's kingdom; the priests blowing with trumpets at that time, represents ministers preaching the gospel; the people compassed the city seven days, the priests blowing the trumpets; but when the day was come that the walls of the city were to fall, the priests were more frequent and abundant in blowing their trumpets; there was as much done in one day then, as had been done in seven days before; they compassed the city seven times that day, blowing their trumpets, till at length it came to one long and perpetual blast, and then the walls of the city fell down flat. The extraordinary preaching, that shall be at the beginning of that glorious jubilee of the church, is represented by the extraordinary sounding of trumpets throughout the land of Canaan, at the beginning of the year of jubilee; and by the reading of the law before all Israel, in the year of release, at the feast of tabernacles. And the crowing of the cock, at the break of day, which brought Peter to repentance, seems to me to be intended to signify the awakening of God's church out of their lethargy, wherein they had denied their Lord, by the extraordinary preaching of the gospel that shall be at the dawning of the day of the church's light and glory. And there seems at

this day to be an uncommon hand of Divine Providence, in animating, enabling, and upholding some ministers in such abundant labors.

SECTION IV.

Ministers blamed for making much of outcries, faintings, and bodily effects.

Another thing wherein I think some ministers have been injured, is in being very much blamed for making so much of outcries, faintings, and other bodily effects; speaking of them as tokens of the presence of God, and arguments of the success of preaching; seeming to strive to their utmost to bring a congregation to that pass, and seeming to rejoice in it, yea even blessing God for it, when they see these effects.

Concerning this I would observe, in the first place, that there are many things, with respect to cryings out, falling down, &c., that are charged on ministers, that they are not guilty of. Some would have it that they speak of these things as certain evidences of a work of the Spirit of God on the hearts of their hearers, or that they esteem these bodily effects themselves to be the work of God, as though the Spirit of God took hold of, and agitated the bodies of men; and some are charged with making these things essential, and supposing that persons cannot be converted without them; whereas I never yet could see the person that held either of these things.

But for speaking of such effects as probable tokens of God's presence, and arguments of the success of preaching, it seems to me they are not to be blamed; because I think they are so indeed: and therefore when I see them excited by preaching the important truths of God's word, urged and enforced

by proper arguments and motives, or as consequent on any other means that are good, I do not scruple to speak of them, and to rejoice in them, and bless God for them as such; and that for this (as I think) good reason, viz. that from time to time, upon proper inquiry and examination, and observation of the consequences and fruits, I have found that these are all evidences that the persons in whom these effects appear, are under the influences of God's Spirit in such cases. Cryings out, in such a manner, and with such circumstances as I have seen them from time to time, is as much an evidence to me, of the general cause it proceeds from, as language: I have learned the meaning of it the same way that persons learn the meaning of language, viz. by use and experience. I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held forth to them that are worthy of their being greatly affected by, I rejoice in it much more than merely in an appearance of solemn attention, and a show of affection by weeping; and that because when there have been those outcries, I have found from time to time a much greater and more excellent effect. To rejoice that the work of God is carried on calmly, without much ado, is in effect to rejoice that it is carried on with less power, or that there is not so much of the influence of God's Spirit: for though the degree of the influence of the Spirit of God on *particular persons* is by no means to be judged of by the degree of external appearances, because of the different constitutions, tempers, and circumstances of men; yet if there be a very powerful influence of the Spirit of God on a mixed multitude, it will cause, some way or other, a great visible commotion.

And as to ministers' aiming at such effects, and striving by all means to bring a congregation to that pass, that there should be such an uproar among them; I suppose none aim at it any otherwise, than as they strive to raise the affections of their hearers to such a height as very often appears in these effects; and if it be so, that those affections are com-

monly good, and it be found by experience that such a degree of them commonly has a good effect, I think they are to be justified in so doing.

SECTION V.

Ministers blamed for keeping persons together that are under great affections.

Again, some ministers have been blamed for keeping persons together, that have been under great affections, which have appeared in such extraordinary outward manifestations. Many think this promotes confusion, that persons in such circumstances do but discompose each others' minds, and disturb the minds of others; and that therefore it is best they should be dispersed, and that when any in a congregation are strongly seized, that they cannot forbear outward manifestations of it, they should be removed that others' minds may not be diverted.

But I cannot but think that those that thus object go upon quite wrong notions of things: for though persons ought to take heed that they do not make an ado without necessity; for this will be the way in time to have such appearances lose all their effect; yet the unavoidable manifestations of strong religious affections tend to a happy influence on the minds of by-standers, and are found by experience to have an excellent and durable effect; and so to contrive and order things, that others may have opportunity and advantage to observe them, has been found to be blessed, as a great means to promote the work of God; and to prevent their being in the way of observation, is to prevent the effect of that which God makes use of as a principal means of carrying on his work at such an extraordinary time, viz. example; which is often

spoken of in scripture as one of the chief means by which God would carry on his work, in the time of the prosperity of religion in the latter days: I have mentioned some texts already to this purpose, in what I published before, of *the marks of a work of the true Spirit*; but would here mention some others. In Zech. ix. 15, 16., those that in the latter day should be filled in an extraordinary manner with the Holy Spirit, so as to appear in outward manifestations, and making a noise, are spoken of as those that God, in these uncommon circumstances, will set up to the view of others, as a prize or ensign, by their example and the excellency of their attainments, to animate and draw others, as men gather about an ensign, and run for a prize, a crown, and precious jewels, set up in their view. The words are, "And they shall drink, and make a noise, as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar: and the Lord their God shall save them, in that day, as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land." (But I shall have occasion to say something more of this scripture afterwards.) Those that make the objection I am upon, instead of suffering this prize or ensign to be in public view, are for having it removed, and hid in some corner. To the like purpose is that, Isa. lxii. 3. "Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem, in the hand of thy God." Here it is observable, that it is not said, Thou shalt be a crown *upon the head*, but *in the hand* of the Lord, i. e. held forth in thy beauty and excellency, as a prize, to be bestowed upon others that shall behold thee, and be animated by the brightness and lustre which God shall endow thee with. The great influence of the example of God's people, in their bright and excellent attainments, to propagate religion in those days, is further signified in Isa. lx. 3. "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." With ver. 22. "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." And Zech.

x. 8, 9. "And they shall increase, as they have increased; and I will sow them among the people." And Hos. ii. 23. "And I will sow her unto me in the earth." So Jer. xxxi. 27.

SECTION VI.

Objection against speaking much, and with great earnestness, by persons affected.

Another thing that gives great disgust to many, is the disposition that persons show, under great affections, to speak so much, and with such earnestness and vehemence, to be setting forth the greatness, and wonderfulness, and importance of divine and eternal things, and to be so passionately warning, inviting, and entreating others. Concerning which I would say, that I am far from thinking that such a disposition should be wholly without any limits or regulation (as I shall more particularly show afterwards); and I believe some have erred in setting no bounds, and indulging and encouraging this disposition without any kind of restraint or direction: but yet it seems to me that such a disposition in general, is what both reason and scripture will justify. Those that are offended at such things, as though they were unreasonable, are not just: upon examination it will probably be found that they have one rule of reasoning about temporal things, and another about spiritual things. They will not at all wonder, if a person, on some very great and affecting occasion of extraordinary danger or great joy, that eminently and immediately concerns him and others, is disposed to speak much, and with great earnestness, especially to those to whom he is united in the bonds of dear affection, and great concern for their good. And therefore if they were

just, why would not they allow it in spiritual things? And much *more* in them, agreeably to the vastly greater importance, and more affecting nature of spiritual things, and the concern which true religion causes in men's minds for the good of others, and the disposition it gives and excites to speak God's praises, to show forth his infinite glory, and talk of all his glorious perfections and works?

That a very great sense, of the right kind, of the importance of the things of religion, and the danger sinners are in, should sometimes cause an almost insuperable disposition to speak and warn others, is agreeable to Jer. vi. 10, 11. "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged, with him that is full of days." And that true Christians, when they come to be, as it were, waked out of sleep, and to be filled with a sweet and joyful sense of the excellent things of religion, by the preaching of the gospel, or by other means of grace, should be disposed to be much in speaking of divine things, though before they were dumb, is agreeable to what Christ says to his church, Cant. vii. 9. "And the roof of thy mouth is like the best wine, for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak." The roof of the church's mouth, is the officers of the church that preach the gospel; their word is to Christ's beloved, like the best wine, that goes down sweetly; extraordinarily refreshing and enlivening the saints, causing them to speak, though before they were mute and asleep. It is said by some that the people that are the subjects of this work, when they get together, talking loud and earnestly in their pretended great joys, several in a room talking at the same time, make a

noise just like a company of drunken persons. On which I would observe, that it is foretold that God's people should do so, in that forementioned place, Zech. ix. 15, 16, 17., which I shall now take more particular notice of: the words are as follows: "The Lord of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise, as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar: and the Lord their God shall save them in that day, as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land: for how great is his goodness! and how great is his beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." The words are very remarkable: here it is foretold, that at the time when Christ shall set up a universal kingdom upon earth, ver. 20., the children of Zion shall drink till they are filled like the vessels of the sanctuary; and if we would know what they shall be thus filled with, the prophecy does in effect explain itself: they shall be filled as the vessels of the sanctuary that contained the drink offering, which was wine; and yet the words imply that it shall not literally be wine that they shall drink and be filled with, because it is said they shall drink and make a noise, *as through wine*, as if they had drank wine; which implies that they had not literally done it, and therefore we must understand the words, that they shall drink into that, and be filled with that, which the wine of the drink offering represented, or was a type of, which is the Holy Spirit, as well as the blood of Christ, that new wine that is drank in our heavenly Father's kingdom: they shall be filled with the Spirit, which the apostle sets in opposition to a being drunk with wine, Eph. v. 18. This is the new wine spoken of, ver. 17. It is the same with that *best wine*, spoken of in Canticles, *that goes down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.* It is here foretold that the children of Zion, in the latter days, should be filled with that which should make them cheerful,

and cause them to make a noise as through wine, and by which these joyful, happy persons, that are thus filled, shall be as the stones of a crown lifted up as an ensign upon God's land, being made joyful in the extraordinary manifestations of the beauty and love of Christ: as it follows, *How great is his goodness! and how great is his beauty!* And it is further remarkable, that it is here foretold that it should be thus especially amongst young people; *Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.* It would be ridiculous to understand this of literal bread and wine: without doubt, the same spiritual blessings are signified by bread and wine here, which were represented by Melchizedeck's bread and wine, and are signified by the bread and wine in the Lord's supper. One of the marginal readings is, *shall make the young men to speak;* which is agreeable to that in Canticles, of the *best wine's causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.*

We ought not to be, in any measure, like the unbelieving Jews in Christ's time, who were disgusted both with crying out with distress and with joy. When the poor blind man cried out before all the multitude, *Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!* and continued instantly thus doing, the multitude rebuked him, and charged him that he should hold his tongue, Mark x. 46, 47, 48., and Luke xviii. 38, 39. They looked upon it to be a very indecent noise that he made; a thing very ill-becoming him to cause his voice to be heard so much and so loud among the multitude. And when Christ made his solemn and triumphant entry into Jerusalem, (which, I have before observed, was a type of the glory and triumph of the latter days,) the whole multitude of the disciples, of all sorts, especially young people, began to rejoice and praise God, with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, *Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!* The Pharisees said to Christ, *Master, rebuke thy disciples.* They did not un-

derstand such great transports of joy; it seemed to them a very unsuitable and indecent noise and clamor that they made, a confused uproar, many crying out together, as though they were out of their wits; they wondered that Christ would tolerate it. But what says Christ? *I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.* The words seem to intimate as much as that there was cause enough to constrain those whose hearts were not harder than the very stones, to cry out, and make a noise; which is something like that other expression, of *causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.*

When many, under great religious affections, are earnestly speaking together, of divine wonders, in various parts of a company, to those that are next to them; some attending to what one says, and others to another, there is something very beautiful in it, provided they do not speak so many as to drown each others' voices, that none can hear what any say; there is a greater and more affecting appearance of a joint engagedness of heart, in the love and praises of God. And I had rather see it, than to see one speaking alone, and all attending to what he says; it has more of the appearance of conversation. When a multitude meets on any occasion of temporal rejoicing, freely and cheerfully to converse together, they be not wont to observe the ceremony, of but one speaking at a time, while all the rest, in a formal manner, set themselves to attend to what he says; that would spoil all conversation, and turn it into the formality of set speeches, and the solemnity of preaching. It is better for lay persons, when they speak one to another of the things of God, when they meet together to speak after the manner of Christian conversation, than to observe the formality of but one speaking at a time, the whole multitude silently and solemnly attending to what he says; which would carry in it too much of the air of the authority and solemnity of preaching. What the apostle says, 1 Cor. xiv. 29, 30, 31., "Let the prophets speak, two, or three, and let the other judge: if any

thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace ; for ye may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted ;" I say, this does not reach this case ; because what the apostle is speaking of, is the solemnity of their religious exercises, in public worship, and persons speaking in the church by immediate inspiration, and in the use of the gift of prophecy, or some gift of inspiration, in the exercise of which they acted as extraordinary ministers of Christ.

SECTION VII.

Some find fault with so much singing in religious meetings.

Another thing that some have found fault with, is abounding so much in singing in religious meetings. Objecting against such a thing as this, seems to arise from a suspicion already established of this work : they doubt of the pretended extraordinary love and joys that attend this work, and so find fault with the manifestations of them. If they thought persons were truly the subjects of an extraordinary degree of divine love, and heavenly rejoicing in God, I suppose they would not wonder at their having a disposition to be much in praise. They will not object against the saints and angels in heaven singing praises and hallelujahs to God, without ceasing, day or night ; and therefore doubtless will allow, that the more the saints on earth are like them in their dispositions, the more they will be disposed to do like them. They will readily own that the generality of Christians have great reason to be ashamed that they have so little thankfulness, and are no more in praising God, whom they have such infinite cause to praise : and why therefore should Christians be found fault with for showing

a disposition to be much in praising God, and manifesting a delight in that heavenly exercise? To complain of this, is to be too much like the Pharisees, who were disgusted when the multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and with loud voices to praise God, and cry hosanna, when Christ was entering into Jerusalem.

There are many things in scripture that seem to intimate, that praising God, both in speeches and songs, will be what the church of God will very much abound in, in the approaching glorious day. So on the seventh day of compassing the walls of Jericho, when the priests blew with the trumpets, in an extraordinary manner, the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall of the city fell down flat. So the ark was brought back from its banishment, with extraordinary shouting and singing of the whole congregation of Israel. And the places in the prophecies of scripture, that signify that the church of God, in that glorious jubilee that is foretold, shall greatly abound in singing and shouting forth the praises of God, are too many to be mentioned. And there will be cause enough for it: I believe it will be a time wherein both heaven and earth will be much more full of joy and praise than ever they were before.

But what is more especially found fault with in the singing that is now practiced, is making use of hymns of human composure. And I am far from thinking that the book of psalms should be thrown by in our public worship, but that it should always be used in the Christian church, to the end of the world: but I know of no obligation we are under to confine ourselves to it. I can find no command or rule of God's word, that does any more confine us to the words of the scripture in our singing, than it does in our praying; we speak to God in both: and I can see no reason why we should limit ourselves to such particular forms of words, that we find in the Bible, in speaking to him by way of praise, in metre, and with music, than when we speak to him in prose, by way of prayer and supplication. And it is really needful

that we should have some other songs besides the psalms of David : it is unreasonable to suppose that the Christian church, should forever, and even in times of her greatest light, in her praises of God and the Lamb, be confined only to the words of the Old Testament, wherein all the greatest and most glorious things of the gospel, that are infinitely the greatest subjects of her praise, are spoken of under a veil, and not so much as the name of our glorious Redeemer ever mentioned, but in some dark figure, or as hid under the name of some type. And as to our making use of the words of others, and not those that are conceived by ourselves, it is no more than we do in all our public prayers ; the whole worshiping assembly, excepting one only, makes use of the words that are conceived by him that speaks for the rest.

SECTION VIII.

Many dislike the religious meetings of children, to read and pray together.

Another thing that many have disliked, is the religious meetings of children, to read and pray together, and perform religious exercises by themselves. What is objected, is children's want of that knowledge and discretion that is requisite in order to a decent and profitable management of religious exercises. But it appears to me the objection is not sufficient : children, as they have the nature of men, are inclined to society ; and those of them that are capable of society one with another, are capable of the influences of the Spirit of God, in its active fruits ; and if they are inclined by a religious disposition that they have from the Spirit of God, to improve their society one with another, in a religious manner, and to religious purposes, who should forbid them ? If they have not discretion to observe method in their religious

performances, or to speak sense in all that they say in prayer, they may, notwithstanding, have a good meaning, and God understands them, and it does not spoil or interrupt their devotion one with another. We that are grown persons, have defects in our prayers, that are a thousand times worse in the sight of God, and are a greater confusion, and more absurd nonsense in his eyes, than their childish indiscretions. There is not so much difference before God, between children and grown persons, as we are ready to imagine ; we are all poor, ignorant, foolish babes, in his sight : our adult age does not bring us so much nearer to God, as we are apt to think. God in this work has shown a remarkable regard to little children ; never was there such a glorious work amongst persons in their childhood, as has been of late in New England : he has been pleased in a wonderful manner to perfect praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings ; and many of them have more of that knowledge and wisdom, that pleases him, and renders their religious worship acceptable, than many of the great and learned men of the world : it is they, in the sight of God, are the ignorant and foolish children : these are grown men, and a hundred years old, in comparison with them ; and it is to be hoped that the days are coming, prophesied of Isa. lxv. 20., when "the child shall die a hundred years old."

I have seen many happy effects of children's religious meetings ; and God has seemed often remarkably to own them in their meetings, and really descended from heaven to be amongst them : I have known several probable instances of children being converted at such meetings. I should therefore think, that if children appear to be really moved to it, by a religious disposition, and not merely from a childish affectation of imitating grown persons, they ought by no means to be discouraged or discountenanced : but yet it is fit that care should be taken of them, by their parents, and pastors, to instruct and direct them, and to correct imprudent conduct and irregularities, if they are perceived ; or any

thing by which the devil may pervert and destroy the design of their meetings. All should take heed that they do not find fault with, and despise the religion of children, from an evil principle, lest they should be like the chief priests and scribes, who were sore displeased at the religious worship and praises of little children, and the honor they gave Christ in the temple. We have an account of it, and of what Christ said upon it, in Mat. xxi. 15, 16. "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, hosanna to the Son of David, they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise?"

THOUGHTS ON THE REVIVAL, &c.

PART IV.

SHOWING WHAT THINGS ARE TO BE CORRECTED OR AVOIDED IN PROMOTING THIS WORK, OR IN OUR BEHAVIOR UNDER IT.

HAVING thus observed, in some instances, wherein the conduct of those that have appeared to be the subjects of this work, or have been zealous to promote it, has been objected against, or complained of, without or beyond just cause, I proceed now, in the

Second place, to show what things ought to be corrected or avoided.

Many that are zealous for this glorious work of God, are heartily sick of the great noise there is in the country about *imprudences* and *disorders ;* they have heard it so often from the mouths of opposers, that they are prejudiced against the sound ; and they look upon it that that which is called a being *prudent* and *regular*, which is so much insisted on, is no other than being asleep, or cold and dead in religion, and that the great imprudence that is so much cried out of, is only being alive, and engaged in the things of God : and they are therefore rather confirmed in any practice, than brought off from it, by the clamor they hear against it, as imprudent and irregular. And to tell the truth, the cry of irregularity and imprudence has been much more in the mouths of those that have been enemies to the main of the work, than others ; for they have watched for the halting of

the zealous, and eagerly catched at any thing that has been wrong, and have greatly insisted on it, made the most of it, and magnified it; especially have they watched for errors in zealous preachers, that are much in reproving and condemning the wickedness of the times: they would therefore do well to consider that scripture, Isa. xxix. 20, 21. "The scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off, that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought." They have not only too much insisted on, and magnified real errors, but have very injuriously charged them as guilty, in things wherein they have been innocent, and have done their duty. This has so prejudiced the minds of some, that they have been ready to think that all that has been said about errors and imprudences, was injurious, and from an ill spirit; and has confirmed them in it, and there is no such thing as any prevailing imprudences; and it has made them less cautious and suspicious of themselves, lest they should err. Herein the devil has had an advantage put into his hands, and has taken the advantage; and, doubtless, has been too subtle for some of the true friends of religion. That would be a strange thing indeed, if in so great a commotion and revolution, and such a new state of things, wherein so many have been engaged, none have been guilty of any imprudence; it would be such a revival of religion as never was yet, if among so many men, not guided by infallible inspiration, there had not been prevailing a pretty many notable errors in judgment and conduct: our young preachers, and young converts, must in general vastly exceed Luther, the head of the reformation, who was guilty of a great many excesses in that great affair in which God made him the chief instrument.

If we look back into the history of the church of God in past ages, we may observe that it has been a common device of the devil, to overset a revival of religion, when he finds he can keep men quiet and secure no longer, then to drive

them to excesses and extravagances. He holds them back as long as he can, but when he can do it no longer, then he will push them on, and if possible, run them upon their heads. And it has been by this means chiefly, that he has been successful, in several instances, to overthrow most hopeful and promising beginnings : yea, the principal means by which the devil was successful, by degrees, to overset that grand religious revival of the world, that was in the primitive ages of Christianity, and in a manner to overthrow the Christian church through the earth, and to make way for, and bring on the great Antichristian apostasy, that masterpiece of all the devil's works, was to improve the indiscreet zeal of Christians, to drive them into those three extremes, of *enthusiasm, superstition, and severity towards opposers ;* which should be enough for an everlasting warning to the Christian church.

Though the devil will do his diligence to stir up the open enemies of religion, yet he knows what is for his interest so well, that in a time of revival of religion, his main strength shall be tried with the friends of it, and he will chiefly exert himself in his attempts upon them, to mislead them. One truly zealous person, in the time of such an event, that seems to have a great hand in the affair, and draws the eyes of many upon him, may do more (through Satan's being too subtle for him) to hinder the work, than a hundred great, and strong, and open opposers.

In the time of a great *work of Christ*, his hands, with which he *works*, are often wounded in the house of his friends ; and his work hindered chiefly by them : so that if any one inquires, as in Zech. xiii. 6., " What are those wounds in thine hands ?" He may answer, *those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.*

The errors of the friends of the work of God, and especially of the great promoters of it, give vast advantage to the enemies of such a work. Indeed there are many things that are no errors, but are only duties faithfully and thoroughly done,

that wound the minds of such persons more, and are more cross to them, than real errors: but yet one real error gives opposers as much advantage, and hinders and clogs the work, as much as ten that are only supposed ones. Real errors do not fret and gall the enemies of religion, so much as those things that are strictly right; but they encourage them more; they give them liberty, and open a gap for them; so that some that before kept their enmity burning in their own bowels, and durst not show themselves, will on such an occasion take courage, and give themselves vent, and their rage will be like that of an enemy let loose; and those that lay still before, having nothing to say, but what they would be ashamed of, (agreeable to Tit. ii. 8.), when they have such a weapon put into their hands, will fight with all violence. And indeed the enemies of religion would not know what to do for weapons to fight with, were it not for the errors of the friends of it; and so must soon fall before them. And besides, in real errors, things that are truly disagreeable to the rules of God's word, we cannot expect the divine protection, and that God will appear on our side, as if our errors were only supposed ones.

Since therefore the errors of the friends and promoters of such a glorious work of God, are of such dreadful consequence; and seeing the devil, being sensible of this, is so assiduous, and watchful, and subtle, in his attempts with them, and has thereby been so successful to overthrow religion heretofore, certainly such persons ought to be exceeding circumspect and vigilant, diffident and jealous of themselves, and humbly dependent on the guidance of the good Shepherd. 1 Pet. iv. 7., "Be sober, and watch unto prayer." And chap. v. 8., "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about." For persons to go on resolutely, in a kind of heat and vehemence, despising admonition and correction, being confident that they must be in the right, because they are full of the Spirit,

is directly contrary to the import of these words, be *sober*, be *vigilant*.

It is a mistake, I have observed in some, by which they have been greatly exposed, to their wounding, that they think they are in no danger of going astray, or being misled by the devil, because they are near to God; and so have no jealous eye upon themselves, and neglect vigilance and circumspection, as needless in their case. They say, they do not think that God will leave them to dishonor him, and wound religion, as long as they keep near to him: and I believe so too, as long as they keep near to God in that respect, that they maintain a universal and diligent watch, and care to do their duty, and avoid sin and snares, with diffidence in themselves, and humble dependence and prayerfulness: but not merely because they are near to God, in that respect, that they now are receiving blessed communications from God, in refreshing views of him; if at the same time they let down their watch, and are not jealous over their own hearts, by reason of its remaining blindness and corruption, and a subtle adversary. It is a grand error, for persons to think they are out of danger of the devil, and a corrupt, deceitful heart, even in their highest flights, and most raised frames of spiritual joy. For persons in such a confidence to cease to be jealous of themselves, and to neglect watchfulness and care, is a presumption by which I have known many wofully ensnared. However highly we may be favored with divine discoveries and comforts, yet as long as we are in the world, we are in the enemy's country; and therefore that direction of Christ to his disciples, is never out of date in this world: Luke xxi. 36., "Watch and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of man." It was not out of date with the disciples, to whom it was given, after they came to be filled so full of the Holy Ghost, and out of their bellies flowed rivers of living water, by that great effusion of the Spirit upon them, that began on the day of pentecost. And though God stands

ready to protect his people, especially those that are near to him, yet he expects great care and labor of all; and that we should put on the whole armor of God, that we may stand in the evil day: and whatever spiritual privileges we are raised to, we have no warrant to expect protection in any other way; for God has appointed this whole life as a state of labor, to be all as a race or a battle; the state of rest, wherein we shall be so out of danger, as to have no need of watching and fighting, is reserved for another world. I have known it in abundance of instances, that the devil has come in very remarkably, even in the midst of the most exalted, and upon some accounts excellent frames: it may seem a great mystery that it should be so; but it is no greater mystery, than that Christ should be taken captive by the devil, and carried into the wilderness, immediately after the heavens had been opened to him, and the Holy Ghost descended like a dove upon him, and he heard that comfortable, joyful voice from the Father, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* In like manner, Christ in the heart of a Christian is oftentimes, as it were, taken by the devil, and carried captive into a wilderness, presently after heaven has been, as it were, opened to the soul, and the Holy Ghost has descended upon it like a dove, and God has been sweetly owning the believer, and testifying his favor to him as his beloved child.

It is therefore a great error and sin in some persons, at this day, that they are fixed in their way, in some things that others account errors, and will not hearken to admonition and counsel, but are confident that they are in the right of it, in those practices that they find themselves disposed to, because God is much with them, and they have great degrees of the Spirit of God. There were some such in the apostles' days: the apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, was sensible that some of them would not be easily convinced that they had been in any error, because they looked upon themselves *spiritual*, or full of the Spirit of

God. 1 Cor. xiv. 37, 38. "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you, are the commandment of the Lord; but if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

And although those that are spiritual amongst us have no infallible apostle to admonish them, yet let me entreat them, by the love of Christ, calmly and impartially to weigh what may be said to them, by one that is their hearty and fervent friend (though an inferior worm) in giving his humble opinion concerning the errors that have been committed, or that we may be exposed to, in methods or practices that have been, or may be fallen into by the zealous friends or promoters of this great work of God.

In speaking of the errors that have been, or that we are in danger of, I would in the

First place, Take notice of the causes whence the errors that attend a great revival of religion usually arise; and as I go along, take notice of some particular errors that arise from each of those causes.

Secondly, Observe some errors that some have lately gone into, that have been owing to the influence of several of those causes conjunctly.

As to the first of these, the errors that attend a great revival of religion, usually arise from these three things. 1. Undiscerned spiritual pride. 2. Wrong principles. 3. Ignorance of Satan's advantages and devices.

SECTION I.

One cause of errors in a great revival, is spiritual pride.

The first, and the worst cause of errors, that prevail in such a state of things, is *spiritual pride.* This is the main door by which the devil comes into the hearts of those that are zealous for the advancement of religion. It is the chief inlet of smoke from the bottomless pit, to darken the mind, and mislead the judgment: this is the main handle by which the devil has hold of religious persons, and the chief source of all the mischief that he introduces, to clog and hinder a work of God. This cause of error is the main spring, or at least the main support of all the rest. Till this disease is cured, medicines are in vain applied to heal other diseases. It is by this that the mind defends itself in other errors, and guards itself against light, by which it might be corrected and reclaimed. The spiritually proud man is full of light already, he does not need instruction, and is ready to despise the offer of it. But if this disease be healed, other things are easily rectified. The humble person is like a little child, he easily receives instruction; he is jealous over himself, sensible how liable he is to go astray; and therefore if it be suggested to him that he does so, he is ready most narrowly and impartially to inquire. Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach, as humility, and so prepares the mind for true divine light, without darkness, and so clears the eye to look on things as they truly are. Psalm xxv. 9. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way." Therefore we should fight neither with small nor with great, but with the king of Israel: our first care should be to rectify the heart, and pull the beam out of our eye, and then we shall see clearly.

I know that a great many things at this day are very injuriously laid to the pride of those that are zealous in the cause of God. When any person appears, in any respect, remarkably distinguished in religion from others, if he professes those spiritual comforts and joys that are greater than ordinary, or if he appears distinguishingly zealous in religion, if he exerts himself more than others do in the cause of religion, or if he seems to be distinguished with success, ten to one but it will immediately awaken the jealousy of those that are about him; and they will suspect (whether they have cause or no) that he is very proud of his goodness, and that he affects to have it thought that nobody is so good as he; and all his talk is heard, and all his behavior beheld, with this prejudice. Those that are themselves cold and dead, and especially such as never had any experience of the power of godliness on their own hearts, are ready to entertain such thoughts of the best Christians, which arises from a secret enmity against vital and fervent piety.

But then those that are zealous Christians should take heed that this injuriousness of those that are cold in religion, do not prove a snare to them, and the devil do not take advantage from it, to blind their eyes from beholding what there is indeed of this nature in their hearts, and make them think, because they are charged with pride wrongfully, and from an ill spirit, in many things, that therefore it is so in every thing. Alas, how much pride have the best of us in our hearts! It is the worst part of the body of sin and death. It is the first sin that ever entered into the universe, and the last that is rooted out; it is God's most stubborn enemy!

The corruption of nature may all be resolved into two things, *pride* and *worldly-mindedness*, the *devil* and the *beast*, or *self* and the *world*. These are the two pillars of Dagon's temple, on which the whole house leans. But the former of these is every way the worst part of the corruption of nature; it is the first born son of the devil, and his image in

the heart of man chiefly consists in it: it is the last thing in a sinner that is overborne by conviction, in order to conversion; and here is the saint's hardest conflict; it is the last thing that he obtains a good degree of conquest over, and liberty from; it is that which most directly militates against God, and is most contrary tot he Spirit of the Lamb of God; and it is most like the devil its father, in a serpentine deceitfulness and secrecy; it lies deepest, is most active, and is most ready secretly to mix itself with every thing.

And of all kinds of pride, spiritual pride is, upon many accounts, the most hateful; it is most like the devil; it is most like the sin he committed in a heaven of light and glory, where he was exalted high in divine knowledge, honor, beauty, and happiness. Pride is much more difficultly discerned than any other corruption, for that reason, that the nature of it does very much consist in a person's having too high a thought of himself: but no wonder that he that has too high a thought of himself, does not know it; for he necessarily thinks that the opinion he has of himself, is what he has just grounds for, and therefore not too high; if he thought such an opinion of himself was without just grounds, he would therein cease to have it. But of all kinds of pride, spiritual pride is the most hidden, and difficultly discovered; and that for this reason, because those that are spiritually proud, their pride consists much in a high conceit of those two things, viz. their *light* and their *humility:* both which are a strong prejudice against a discovery of their pride. Being proud of their *light*, that makes them not jealous of themselves; he that thinks a clear light shines around him, is not suspicious of an enemy lurking near him, unseen: and then being proud of their *humility*, that makes them least of all jealous of themselves in that particular, viz. as being under the prevalence of pride. There are many sins of the heart that are very secret in their nature, and difficultly discerned. The psalmist says, Psalm xix. 12., "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults." But spiritual

pride is the most secret of all sins. The heart is so deceitful and unsearchable in nothing in the world, as it is in this matter, and there is no sin in the world, that men are so confident in, and so difficultly convinced of: the very nature of it is to work self-confidence, and drive away self-diffidence, and jealousy of any evil of that kind. There is no sin so much like the devil, as this; for secrecy and subtlety, and appearing in a great many shapes, undiscerned and unsuspected, and appearing as an angel of light: it takes occasion to arise from every thing; it perverts and abuses every thing; and even the exercises of real grace, and real humility, as an occasion to exert itself: it is a sin that has, as it were, many lives; if you kill it, it will live still; if you mortify and suppress it in one shape, it rises in another; if you think it is all gone, yet it is there still: there are a great many kinds of it, that lie in different forms and shapes, one under another, and encompass the heart like the coats of an onion; if you pull off one there is another underneath. We had need, therefore, to have the greatest watch imaginable over our hearts, with respect to this matter, and to cry most earnestly to the great Searcher of hearts for his help. He that trusts his own heart is a fool.

God's own people should be the more jealous of themselves with respect to this particular, at this day, because the temptations that many have to this sin are exceeding great: the great and distinguishing privileges to which God admits many of his saints, and the high honors that he puts on some ministers, are great trials of persons in this respect. It is true that great degrees of the spiritual presence of God, tends greatly to mortify pride and all corruption; but yet, though in the experience of such favors there be much to restrain pride one way, there is much to tempt and provoke it another; and we shall be in great danger thereby, without great watchfulness and prayerfulness. There was much in the circumstances that the angels that fell were in, in heaven, in their great honors and high privileges, in beholding the face of God, and

view of his infinite glory, to cause in them exercises of humility, and to keep them from pride; yet through want of watchfulness in them, their great honor and heavenly privilege proved to be, to them, an undoing temptation to pride, though they had no principle of pride in their hearts, to expose them. Let no saint, therefore, however eminent, and however near to God, think himself out of danger of this: he that thinks himself most out of danger, is indeed most in danger. The apostle Paul, who doubtless was as eminent a saint as any are now, was not out of danger, even just after he was admitted to see God in the third heavens, by the information he himself gives us, 2 Cor. xii. And yet doubtless, what he saw in heaven of the ineffable glory of the Divine Being, had a direct tendency to make him appear exceeding little and vile in his own eyes.

Spiritual pride in its own nature is so secret, that it is not so well discerned by immediate intuition on the thing itself, as by the effects and fruits of it; some of which I would mention, together with the contrary fruits of pure Christian humility.

Spiritual pride disposes to speak of other persons' sins, their enmity against God and his people, the miserable delusion of hypocrites, and their enmity against vital piety, and the deadness of some saints, with bitterness, or with laughter and levity, and an air of contempt; whereas pure Christian humility rather disposes, either to be silent about them, or to speak of them with grief and pity.

Spiritual pride is very apt to suspect others; whereas a humble saint is most jealous of himself; he is so suspicious of nothing in the world as he is of his own heart. The spiritually proud person is apt to find fault with other saints, that they are low in grace, and to be much in observing how cold and dead they be, and crying out of them for it, and to be quick to discern and take notice of their deficiences: but the eminently humble Christian has so much to do at home, and sees so much evil in his own heart, and is so concerned about

it, that he is not apt to be very busy with others' hearts; he complains most of himself, and cries out of his own coldness and lowness in grace, and is apt to esteem others better than himself, and is ready to hope that there is nobody but what has more love and thankfulness to God than he, and cannot bear to think that others should bring forth no more fruit to God's honor than he. Some that have spiritual pride mixed with high discoveries and great transports of joy, that dispose them in an earnest manner to talk to others, are apt, in such frames, to be calling upon other Christians that are about them, and sharply reproving them for their being so cold and lifeless. And there are some others that behave themselves very differently from these, who in their raptures are overwhelmed with a sense of their own vileness; and when they have extraordinary discoveries of God's glory, are all taken up about their own sinfulness; and though they also are disposed to speak much and very earnestly, yet it is very much in crying out of themselves, and exhorting fellow-Christians, but in a charitable and humble manner. Pure Christian humility disposes a person to take notice of every thing that is in any respect good in others, and to make the best of it, and to diminish their failings; but to have his eye chiefly on those things that are bad in himself, and to take much notice of every thing that aggravates them.

In a contrariety to this, it has been the manner in some places, or at least the manner of some persons, to speak of almost every thing that they see amiss in others, in the most harsh, severe, and terrible language. It is frequent with them to say of others' opinions, or conduct, or advice, or of their coldness, their silence, their caution, their moderation, and their prudence, and many other things that appear in them, that they are from the devil, or from hell; that such a thing is devilish, or hellish, or cursed, and that such persons are serving the devil, or the devil is in them, and they are soul-murderers, and the like; so that the words *devil* and *hell* are almost continually in their mouths. And such kind

of language they will commonly use, not only towards wicked men, but towards them that they themselves allow to be the true children of God, and also towards ministers of the gospel, and others that are very much their superiors. And they look upon it a virtue and high attainment thus to behave themselves. "O, (say they,) we must be plain hearted and bold for Christ, we must declare war against sin wherever we see it, we must not mince the matter in the cause of God, and when speaking for Christ." And to make any distinction in persons, or to speak the more tenderly, because that which is amiss is seen in a superior, they look upon as very mean for a follower of Christ, when speaking in the cause of his Master.

What a strange device of the devil is here to overthrow all Christian meekness and gentleness, and even all show and appearance of it, and to defile the mouths of the children of God, and to introduce the language of common sailors among the followers of Christ, under a cloak of high sanctity, and zeal, and boldness for Christ! And it is a remarkable instance of the weakness of the human mind, and how much too cunning the devil is for us!

The grand defense of this way of talking is, that they say no more than what is true; they only speak the truth without mincing the matter; and that true Christians that have a great sight of the evil of sin, and acquaintance with their own hearts, know it to be true, and therefore will not be offended to hear such harsh expressions made use of concerning them and ther sins; it is only (say they) hypocrites, or cold and dead Christians, that are provoked, and feel their enmity rise on such an occasion.

But it is a grand mistake to think that we may commonly use, concerning one another, all such language as represents the worst of each other, according to strict truth. It is really true, that every kind of sin, and every degree of it, is devilish, and from hell, and is cursed, hellish, and condemned or damned: and if persons had a full sight of their hearts,

they would think no terms too bad for them; they would look like beasts, like serpents, and like devils, to themselves; they would be at a loss for language to express what they see in themselves; the worst terms they could think of would seem, as it were, faint to represent what they see in themselves. But shall a child, therefore, from time to time, use such language concerning an excellent and eminently holy father or mother, as that the devil is in them, that they have such and such devilish, cursed dispositions, that they commit, every day, hundreds of hellish, damned acts, and that they are cursed dogs, hell-hounds, and devils? And shall the meanest of the people be justified, in commonly using such language concerning the most excellent magistrates, or their most eminent ministers? I hope nobody has gone to this height: but the same pretenses of boldness, plain heartedness, and declared war against sin, will as well justify these things, as the things they are actually made use of to justify. If we proceed in such a manner, on such principles as these, what a face will be introduced upon the church of Christ, the little beloved flock of that gentle Shepherd, the Lamb of God? What a sound shall we bring into the house of God, into the family of his dear little children? How far off shall we soon banish that lovely appearance of humility, sweetness, gentleness, mutual honor, benevolence, complacence, and an esteem of others above themselves, which ought to clothe the children of God all over? Not but that Christians should watch over one another, and in any wise reprove one another, and be much in it, and do it plainly and faithfully; but it does not thence follow that dear brethren in the family of God, in rebuking one another, should use worse language than Michael the archangel durst use when rebuking the devil himself.

Christians, that are but fellow-worms, ought at least to treat one another with as much humility and gentleness as Christ, that is infinitely above them, treats them. But how did Christ treat his disciples when they were so cold towards

him, and so regardless of him, at the time when his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and he in a dismal agony was crying, and sweating blood for them, and they would not watch with him, and allow him the comfort of their company one hour in his great distress, though he once and again desired it of them? One would think that then was a proper time, if ever, to have reproved them for a devilish, hellish, cursed, and damned slothfulness and deadness. But after what manner does Christ reprove them? Behold his astonishing gentleness! Says he, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And how did he treat Peter when he was ashamed of his Master, while he was made a mocking-stock, and a spitting-stock for him? Why, he looked upon him with a look of love, and melted his heart.

And though we read that Christ once *turned and said unto Peter*, on a certain occasion, *get thee behind me, Satan;* and this may seem like an instance of harshness and severity in reproving Peter, yet I humbly conceive that this is by many taken wrong, and that this is indeed no instance of Christ's severity in his treatment of Peter, but on the contrary, of his wonderful gentleness and grace, distinguishing between Peter and the devil in him, not laying the blame of what Peter had then said, or imputing it to him, but to the devil that influenced him. Christ saw the devil then present, secretly influencing Peter to do the part of a tempter to his Master; and therefore Christ turned him about to Peter, in whom the devil then was, and spake to the devil, and rebuked him. Thus the grace of Christ does not behold iniquity in his people, imputes not what is amiss in them to them, but to sin that dwells in them, and to Satan that influences them.

But to return: spiritual pride often disposes persons to singularity in external appearance, to affect a singular way of speaking, to use a different sort of dialect from others, or to be singular in voice, or air of countenance or behavior:

but he that is an eminently humble Christian, though he will be firm to his duty, however singular he is in it, he will go in the way that leads to heaven alone, though all the world forsakes him ; yet he delights not in singularity for singularity's sake, he does not affect to set up himself to be viewed and observed as one distinguished, as desiring to be accounted better than others, or despising their company, or a union and conformity to them ; but on the contrary, is disposed to become all things to all men, and to yield to others, and to conform to them, and please them, in every thing but sin. Spiritual pride commonly occasions a certain stiffness and inflexibility in persons, in their own judgment, and their own ways ; whereas the eminently humble person, though he be inflexible in his duty, and in those things wherein God's honor is concerned ; and with regard to temptation to those things he apprehends to be sinful, though in never so small a degree, he is not at all of a yieldable spirit, but is like a brazen wall ; yet in other things he is of a pliable disposition, not disposed to set up his own opinion, or his own will ; he is ready to pay deference to others' opinions, and loves to comply with their inclinations, and has a heart that is tender and flexible, like a little child.

Spiritual pride disposes persons to affect separation, to stand at a distance from others, as better than they, and loves the show and appearance of the distinction : but on the contrary, the eminently humble Christian is ready to look upon himself as not worthy that others should be united to him, to think himself more brutish than any man, and worthy to be cast out of human society, and especially unworthy of the society of God's children ; and though he will not be a companion with one that is visibly Christ's enemy, and delights most in the company of lively Christians, will choose such for his companions, and will be most intimate with them, and does not at all delight to spend away much time in the company of those that seem to relish no conversation but about worldly things ; yet he does not love the appearance

of an open separation from visible Christians, as being a kind of distinct company from them, that are one visible company with him by Christ's appointment, and will as much as possible shun all appearances of a superiority, or distinguishing himself as better than others: his universal benevolence delights in the appearance of union with his fellow-creatures, and will maintain it as much as he possibly can, without giving open countenance to iniquity, or wounding his own soul; and herein he follows the example of his meek and lowly Redeemer, who did not keep up such a separation and distance as the Pharisees, but freely ate with publicans and sinners, that he might win them.

The eminently humble Christian is, as it were, clothed with lowliness, mildness, meekness, gentleness of spirit and behavior, and with a soft, sweet, condescending, winning air and deportment; these things are just like garments to him, he is clothed all over with them. 1 Pet. v. 5. "And be clothed with humility." Col. iii. 12. "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering."

Pure Christian humility has no such thing as roughness, or contempt, or fierceness, or bitterness in its nature; it makes a person like a little child, harmless and innocent, and that none need to be afraid of; or like a lamb, destitute of all bitterness, wrath, anger, and clamor, agreeable to Eph. iv. 31.

With such a spirit as this ought especially zealous ministers of the gospel to be clothed, and those that God is pleased to improve as instruments in his hands of promoting his work: they ought indeed to be thorough in preaching the word of God, without mincing the matter at all; in handling the sword of the Spirit, as the ministers of the Lord of hosts, they ought not to be mild and gentle; they are not to be gentle and moderate in searching and awakening the conscience, but should be sons of thunder: the word of God, which is in itself sharper than any two-edged sword, ought not to be sheathed by its ministers, but so used that its sharp

edges may have their full effect, even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow (provided they do it without judging particular persons, leaving it to conscience and the Spirit of God to make the particular application): but all their conversation should savor of nothing but lowliness and good will, love and pity to all mankind; so that such a spirit should be like a sweet odor diffused around them wherever they go, or like a light shining about them, their faces should, as it were, shine with it; they should be like lions to guilty consciences, but like lambs to men's persons. This would have no tendency to prevent the awakening of men's consciences, but on the contrary, would have a very great tendency to awaken them; it would make way for the sharp sword to enter; it would remove the obstacles, and make a naked breast for the arrow. Yea, the amiable, Christ-like conversation of such ministers, in itself would terrify the consciences of men, as well as their terrible preaching; both would co-operate one with another, to subdue the hard, and bring down the proud heart. If there had been constantly and universally observable such a behavior as this in itinerant preachers, it would have terrified the consciences of sinners, ten times as much as all the invectives, and the censorious talk there has been concerning particular persons, for their opposition, hypocrisy, delusion, pharisaism, &c. These things in general have rather stupified sinners' consciences; they take them up, and make use of them as a shield, wherewith to defend themselves from the sharp arrows of the word, that are shot by these preachers: the enemies of the present work have been glad of these things with all their hearts. Many of the most bitter of them are probably such as in the beginning of this work had their consciences something galled and terrified with it; but these errors of awakening preachers are the things they chiefly make use of as plasters to heal the sore that was made in their consciences.

Spiritual pride takes great notice of opposition and injuries that are received, and is apt to be often speaking of them, and to be much in taking notice of the aggravations of them, either with an air of bitterness or contempt: whereas pure, unmixed Christian humility, disposes a person rather to be like his blessed Lord, when reviled, dumb, not opening his mouth, but committing himself in silence to Him that judgeth righteously. The eminently humble Christian, the more clamorous and furious the world is against him, the more silent and still will he be; unless it be in his closet, and there he will not be still. Our blessed Lord Jesus seems never to have been so silent as when the world compassed him round reproaching, buffeting, and spitting upon him, with loud and virulent outcries, and horrid cruelties.

There has been a great deal too much talk of late among many of the true friends of religion about opposition and persecution. It becomes the followers of the Lamb of God, when the world is in an uproar about them, and full of clamor against them, not to raise another noise to answer it, but to be still and quiet: it is not beautiful, at such a time, to have pulpits and conversation ring with the sound, *persecution, persecution*, or with abundant talk about Pharisees, carnal persecutions, and the seed of the serpent.

Meekness and quietness among God's people, when opposed and reviled, would be the surest way to have God remarkably to appear for their defense. It is particularly observed of Moses, on the occasion of Aaron and Miriam their envying him, and rising up in opposition against him, that he "was very meek, above all men upon the face of the earth," Numb. xii. 3., doubtless because he remarkably showed his meekness on that occasion, being wholly silent under the abuse. And how remarkable is the account that follows, of God's being, as it were, suddenly roused to appear for his vindication? And what high honor did he put upon Moses? And how severe were his rebukes of his opposers? The story is very remarkable, and worth

every one's observing. Nothing is so effectual to bring God down from heaven in the defense of his people, as their patience and meekness under sufferings. When Christ "girds his sword upon his thigh, with his glory and majesty, and in his majesty rides prosperously, his right hand teaching him terrible things, it is because of truth and meekness and righteousness." Psalm xlv. 3, 4. "God will cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth shall fear and be still, and God will arise to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth." Psalm lxxvi. 8, 9. "He will lift up the meek, and cast the wicked down to the ground." Psalm cxlvii. 6. "He will reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth, and will smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips will he slay the wicked." Isa. xi. 4. The great commendation that Christ gives the church of Philadelphia, is, that "Thou hast kept the word of my patience." Rev. iii. 10. And we may see what reward he promises her, in the preceding verse, "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship at thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." And thus it is that we might expect to have Christ appear for us, if under all reproaches we are loaded with, we behaved ourselves with a lamblike meekness and gentleness: but if our spirits are raised, and we are vehement and noisy with our complaints under color of Christian zeal, this will be to take upon us our own defense, and God will leave it with us to vindicate our cause as well as we can: yea, if we go on in a way of bitterness, and high censuring, it will be the way to have him rebuke us, and put us to shame before our enemies.

Here some may be ready to say, "it is not in our own cause that we are thus vehement, but it is in the cause of God; and the apostle directed the primitive Christians to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." But how was it that the primitive Christians contended earnestly for the faith? They defended the truth with argu-

ments, and a holy conversation ; but yet gave their reasons with meekness and fear : they contended earnestly for the faith, by fighting violently against their own unbelief, and the corruption of their hearts ; yea, they resisted unto blood, striving against sin ; but the blood that was shed in this earnest strife, was their own blood, and not the blood of their enemies. It was *in the cause of God*, that Peter was so fierce, and drew his sword, and began to smite with it ; but Christ bids him put up his sword again, telling him that they that take the sword shall perish by the sword ; and while Peter wounds, Christ heals. They contend the most violently, and are the greatest conquerors in a time of persecution, who bear it with the greatest meekness and patience.

Great humility improves even the reflections and reproaches of enemies, to put upon serious self-examination, whether or no there be not some just cause, whether they have not in some respect given occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully : whereas spiritual pride improves such reflections to make them the more bold and confident, and to go the greater lengths in that for which they are found fault with. I desire it may be considered whether there has been nothing amiss of late, among the true friends of vital piety in this respect ; and whether the words of David, when reviled by Michal, have not been misinterpreted and misapplied to justify them in it, when he said, I will be yet more vile, and will be base in mine own sight. The import of his words is that he would humble himself yet more before God, being sensible that he was far from being sufficiently abased ; and he signifies this to Michal, and that he longed to be yet lower, and had designed already to abase himself more in his behavior : not that he would go the greater length, to show his regardlessness of her revilings ; that would be to exalt himself, and not more to abase himself, as more vile in his own sight.

Another effect of spiritual pride is a certain unsuitable and self-confident boldness before God and men. Thus some in

their great rejoicings before God, have not paid a sufficient regard to that rule, in Psalm ii. 11. They have not rejoiced with a reverential trembling, in a proper sense of the awful majesty of God, and the awful distance between God and them. And there has also been an improper boldness before men, that has been encouraged and defended, by a misapplication of that scripture, Prov. xxx. 25. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." As though it became all persons, high and low, men, women, and children, in all religious conversation, wholly to divest themselves of all manner of shamefacedness, modesty, or reverence towards man; which is a great error, and quite contrary to scripture. There is a fear of reverence that is due to some men. Rom. xiii. 7. "Fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor." And there is a fear of modesty and shamefacedness, in inferiors towards superiors, that is amiable, and required by Christian rules. 1 Pet. iii. 2. "While they behold our chaste conversation, coupled with fear." And 1 Tim. ii. 9. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." And the apostle means that this virtue shall have place, not only in civil communication, but also in spiritual communication, and in our religious concerns and behavior, as is evident by what follows. Ver. 11, 12. "Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Not that I would hence infer that women's mouths should be shut up from Christian conversation; but all that I mean from it at this time is, that modesty or shamefacedness, and reverence towards men, ought to have some place, even in our religious communication one with another. The same is also evident, by 1 Pet. iii. 15 "Be ready always to give an answer, to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." It is well if that very fear and shamefacedness, which the apostle recommends, has not sometimes been condemned, under the name of a *cursed fear of man.*

It is beautiful for persons when they are at prayer as the mouth of others, to make God only their fear and their dread, and to be wholly forgetful of men that are present, who, let them be great or small, are nothing in the presence of the great God. And it is beautiful for a minister, when he speaks in the name of the Lord of hosts, to be bold, and put off all fear of men. And it is beautiful in private Christians, though they are women and children, to be bold in professing the faith of Christ, and in the practice of all religion, and in owning God's hand in the work of his power and grace, without any fear of men, though they should be reproached as fools and madmen, and frowned upon by great men, and cast off by parents and all the world. But for private Christians, women and others, to instruct, rebuke, and exhort, with a like sort of boldness as becomes a minister when preaching, is not beautiful.

Some have been bold in some things that have really been errors; and have gloried in their boldness in practicing them, though cried out of as odd and irregular. And those that have gone the greatest lengths in these things, have been by some most highly esteemed, as those that come out, and appear bold for the Lord Jesus Christ, and fully on his side; and others that have professed to be godly, that have condemned such things, have been spoken of as enemies of the cross of Christ, or at least very cold and dead; and many that of themselves were not inclined to such practices, have by this means been driven on, being ashamed to be behind, and accounted poor soldiers for Christ.

Another effect of spiritual pride is *assuming*: it oftentimes makes it natural to persons so to act and speak, as though it in a special manner belonged to them to be taken notice of and much regarded. It is very natural to a person that is much under the influence of spiritual pride, to take all that respect that is paid him: if others show a disposition to submit to him, and yield him the deference of a preceptor, he is open to it, and freely admits it; yea, it is natural for

him to expect such treatment, and to take much notice of it if he fails of it, and to have an ill opinion of others that do not pay him that which he looks upon as his prerogative: he is apt to think that it belongs to him to speak, and to clothe himself with a judicial and dogmatical air in conversation, and to take it upon him as what belongs to him, to give forth his sentence, and to determine and decide: whereas pure Christian humility *vaunteth not itself, doth not behave itself unseemly*, and is apt to *prefer others in honor*. One under the influence of spiritual pride, is more apt to instruct others, than to inquire for himself, and naturally puts on the airs of a master: whereas one that is full of pure humility, naturally has on the air of a disciple; his voice is, "What shall I do? What shall I do that I may live more to God's honor? What shall I do with this wicked heart?" He is ready to receive instruction from any body, agreeable to James i. 19. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." The eminently humble Christian thinks he wants help from every body, whereas he that is spiritually proud, thinks that every body wants his help. Christian humility, under a sense of others' misery, entreats and beseeches; spiritual pride affects to command, and warn with authority.

There ought to be the utmost watchfulness against all such appearances of spiritual pride, in all that profess to have been the subjects of this work, and especially in the promoters of it, but above all, in itinerant preachers: the most eminent gifts, and highest tokens of God's favor and blessing, will not excuse them: alas! what is man at his best estate! What is the most highly favored Christian, or the most eminent and successful minister, that he should now think he is sufficient for something, and somebody to be regarded, and that he should go forth, and act among his fellow-creatures, as if he were wise, and strong, and good!

Ministers that have been the principal instruments of carrying on this glorious revival of religion, and that God has

made use of, as it were, to bring up his people out of Egypt, as he did of Moses, should take heed that they do not provoke God as Moses did, by assuming too much to themselves, and by their intemperate zeal, to shut them out from seeing the good things that God is going to do for his church in this world. The fruits of Moses' unbelief, which provoked God to shut him out of Canaan, and not to suffer him to partake of those great things God was about to do for Israel on earth, were chiefly these two things: First, his mingling bitterness with his zeal: he had a great zeal for God, and he could not bear to see the intolerable stiff-neckedness of the people, that they did not acknowledge the work of God, and were not convinced by all his wonders that they had seen: but human passion was mingled with his zeal. Psalm cvi. 32, 33. "They angered him also at the waters of strife; so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." Hear now ye rebels, says he, with bitterness of language. Secondly, he behaved himself, and spoke with an assuming air: he assumed too much to himself: *hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch water out of this rock!* Spiritual pride wrought in Moses at that time: his temptations to it were very great, for he had had great discoveries of God, and had been privileged with intimate and sweet communion with him, and God had made him the instrument of great good to his church; and though he was so humble a person, and, by God's own testimony, meek above all men upon the face of the whole earth, yet his temptations were too strong for him: which surely should make our young ministers, that have of late been highly favored, and have had great success, exceeding careful, and distrustful of themselves. Alas! how far are we from having the strength of holy, meek, aged Moses! The temptation at this day is exceeding great, to both those errors that Moses was guilty of; there is great temptation to bitterness and corrupt passion with zeal; for there is so much unreasonable opposition made

against this glorious work of God, and so much stiff-neckedness manifested in multitudes of this generation, notwithstanding all the great and wonderful works in which God has passed before them, that it greatly tends to provoke the spirits of such as have the interest of this work at heart, so as to move them to speak unadvisedly with their lips. And there is also great temptation to an assuming behavior in some persons: when a minister is greatly succeeded, from time to time, and so draws the eyes of the multitude upon him, and he sees himself flocked after, and resorted to as an oracle, and people are ready to adore him, and to offer sacrifice to him, as it was with Paul and Barnabas, at Lystra, it is almost impossible for a man to avoid taking upon him the airs of a master, or some extraordinary person; a man had need to have a great stock of humility, and much divine assistance, to resist the temptation. But the greater our dangers are, the more ought to be our watchfulness and prayerfulness, and diffidence of ourselves, lest we bring ourselves into mischief. Fishermen that have been very successful, and have caught a great many fish, had need to be careful that they do not at length begin to burn incense to their net. And we should take warning by Gideon, who, after God had highly favored and exalted him, and made him the instrument of working a wonderful deliverance for his people, at length made a god of the spoils of his enemies, which became a snare to him and to his house, so as to prove the ruin of his family.

All young ministers, in this day of the bringing up the ark of God, should take warning by the example of a young Levite in Israel, viz. Uzza, the son of Abinadab. He seemed to have a real concern for the ark of God, and to be zealous and engaged in his mind, on that joyful occasion of bringing up the ark, and God made him an instrument to bring the ark out of its long continued obscurity in Kirjath-jearim, and he was succeeded to bring it a considerable way towards Mount Zion; but for his want of humility, reverence, and

circumspection, and assuming to himself, or taking too much upon him, God broke forth upon him, and smote him for his error, so that he never lived to see and partake of the great joy of his church, on occasion of the carrying up the ark into Mount Zion, and the great blessings of heaven upon Israel, that were consequent upon it. Ministers that have been improved to carry on this work, have been chiefly of the younger sort, who have doubtless (as Uzza had) a real concern for the ark ; and it is evident that they are much animated and engaged in their minds (as he was) in this joyful day of bringing up the ark ; and they are afraid what will become of the ark under the conduct of its ministers (that are sometimes in scripture compared to oxen) ; they see the ark shakes, and they are afraid these blundering oxen will throw it ; and some of them, it is to be feared, have been over officious on this occasion, and have assumed too much to themselves, and have been bold to put forth their hand to take hold of the ark, as though they were the only fit and worthy persons to defend it.

If young ministers had great humility, without a mixture, it would dispose them especially to treat aged ministers with respect and reverence, as their fathers, notwithstanding that a sovereign God may have given them greater assistance and success than they have had. 1 Pet. v. 5. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you, be subject one to another ; and be clothed with humility ; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Lev. xix. 32. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God ; I am the Lord."

As spiritual pride disposes persons to assume much to themselves, so it also disposes them to treat others with neglect: on the contrary, pure Christian humility disposes persons to honor all men, agreeable to that rule, 1 Pet. ii. 17.

There has been in some, that I believe are true friends of religion, too much of an appearance of this fruit of spiritual

pride, in their treatment of those that they looked upon to be carnal men; and particularly in refusing to enter into any discourse or reasoning with them. Indeed to spend a great deal of time in jangling and warm debates about religion, is not the way to propagate religion, but to hinder it; and some are so dreadfully set against this work, that it is a dismal task to dispute with them, all that one can say is utterly in vain; I have found it so by experience; and to go to enter into disputes about religion, at some times, is quite unseasonable, as particularly in meetings for religious conference, or exercises of worship. But yet we ought to be very careful that we do not refuse to discourse with men, with any appearance of a supercilious neglect, as though we counted them not worthy to be regarded; on the contrary, we should condescend to carnal men, as Christ has condescended to us, to bear with our unteachableness and stupidity, and still to follow us with instructions, line upon line, and precept upon precept, saying, Come let us reason together; setting light before us, and using all manner of arguments with us, and waiting upon such dull scholars, as it were hoping that we should receive light. We should be ready with meekness and calmness, without hot disputing, to give our reasons, why we think this work is the work of God, to carnal men when they ask us, and not turn them by as not worthy to be talked with; as the apostle directed the primitive Christians to be ready to give a reason of the Christian faith and hope, to the enemies of Christianity. 1 Pet. iii. 15. "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." And we ought not to condemn all reasoning about things of religion, under the name of carnal reason. For my part, I desire no better than that those that oppose this work, should come fairly to submit to have the cause betwixt us tried by strict reasoning.

One qualification that the scripture speaks of, once and again, as requisite in a minister, is, that he should be apt to

teach, 1 Tim. iii. 2. And the apostle seems to explain what he means by it, in 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.; or at least there expresses one thing he intends by it, viz. that a minister should be ready meekly to condescend to and instruct opposers. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth."

SECTION II.

Errors in a revival, arising from the adoption of wrong principles.

Secondly, Another thing from whence errors in conduct, that attend such a revival of religion, do arise, is *wrong principles.*

And one erroneous principle, than which scarce any has proved more mischievous to the present glorious work of God, is a notion that it is God's manner, now in these days, to guide his saints, at least some that are more eminent, by inspiration, or immediate revelation, and to make known to them what shall come to pass hereafter, or what it is his will that they should do, by impressions that he by his Spirit makes upon their minds, either with or without texts of scripture; whereby something is made known to them, that is not taught in the scripture as the words lie in the Bible. By such a notion the devil has a great door opened for him; and if once this opinion should come to be fully yielded to, and established in the church of God, Satan would have opportunity thereby to set up himself as the guide and oracle of God's people, and to have *his* word regarded as their infallible rule, and so to lead them where he would, and to introduce what he pleased, and soon to bring the Bible into

neglect and contempt. Late experience in some instances, has shown that the tendency of this notion is to cause persons to esteem the Bible as a book that is in a great measure useless.

This error will defend and support all errors. As long as a person has a notion that he is guided by immediate direction from heaven, it makes him incorrigible and impregnable in all his misconduct: for what signifies it, for poor blind worms of the dust, to go to argue with a man, and endeavor to convince him and correct him, that is guided by the immediate counsels and commands of the great Jehovah?

This great work of God has been exceedingly hindered by this error; and till we have quite taken this handle ou of the devil's hands, the work of God will never go on without great clogs and hinderances. But Satan will always have a vast advantage in his hands against it, and as he has improved it hitherto, so he will do still: and it is evident that the devil knows the vast advantage he has by it, that makes him exceeding loath to let go his hold.

It is strange what a disposition there is in many well-disposed and religious persons, to fall in with and hold fast this notion. It is enough to astonish one that such multiplied, plain instances of the failing of such supposed revelations, in the event, do not open every one's eyes. I have seen so many instances of the failing of such impressions, that would almost furnish a history: I have been acquainted with them when made under all kinds of circumstances, and have seen them fail in the event, when made with such circumstances as have been fairest and brightest, and most promising; as when they have been made upon the minds of such, as there was all reason to think were true saints, yea, eminent saints, and at the very time when they have had great divine discoveries, and have been in the high exercise of true communion with God, and made with great strength, and with great sweetness accompanying, and I have had reason to think with an excellent heavenly frame of spirit, yet continued,

and made with texts of scripture, that seemed to be exceeding apposite, yea, many texts following one another, extraordinarily and wonderfully brought to the mind, and with great power and majesty, and the impressions repeated over and over, after prayers to be directed; and yet all has most manifestly come to nothing, to the full conviction of the persons themselves. And God has in so many instances of late in his providence, covered such things with darkness, that one would think it should be enough quite to blank the expectations of such as have been ready to think highly of such things; it seems to be a testimony of God, that he has no design of reviving revelations in his church, and a rebuke from him to the groundless expectations of it.

It seems to me that that scripture, Zech. xiii. 5., is a prophecy concerning ministers of the gospel, in the latter and glorious day of the Christian church, which is evidently spoken of in this and foregoing chapters; the words are, "I am no prophet; I am a husbandman: for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth." The words, I apprehend, are to be interpreted in a spiritual sense; *I am a husbandman.* The work of ministers is very often in the New Testament, compared to the business of the husbandman, that take care of God's husbandry, to whom he lets out his vineyard, and sends them forth to labor in his field, where one plants and another waters, one sows and another reaps; so ministers are called laborers in God's harvest. And as it is added, *man taught me to keep cattle from my youth;* so the work of a minister is very often in scripture represented by the business of a shepherd or pastor. And whereas it is said, *I am no prophet; but man taught me from my youth:* it is as much as to say, I do not pretend to have received my skill, whereby I am fitted for the business of a pastor or shepherd in the church of God, by immediate inspiration, but by education, by being trained up to the business by human learning, and instructions I have received from my youth or childhood, by ordinary means.

And why cannot we be contented with the divine oracles, that holy, pure word of God, that we have in such abundance, and such clearness, now since the canon of scripture is completed? Why should we desire to have any thing added to them by impulses from above? Why should not we rest in that standing rule that God has given to his church, which the apostle teaches us is surer than a voice from heaven? And why should we desire to make the scripture speak more to us than it does? Or why should any desire any higher kind of intercourse with Heaven, than that which is by having the Holy Spirit given in his sanctifying influences, infusing and exciting grace and holiness, love and joy, which is the highest kind of intercourse that the saints and angels in heaven have with God, and the chief excellency of the glorified man Christ Jesus?

Some that follow impulses and impressions, go away with a notion that they do not other than follow the guidance of God's word, and make the scripture their rule, because the impression is made with a text of scripture that comes to their mind, though they take that text as it is impressed on their minds, and improve it as a new revelation, to all intents and purposes, or as the revelation of a particular thing, that is now newly made, while the text in itself, as it is in the Bible, implies no such thing, and they themselves do not suppose that any such revelation was contained in it before. As for instance, suppose that text should come into a person's mind with strong impression, Acts ix. 6., "Arise, and go into the city; and it shall be told thee what thou must do." And he should interpret it as an immediate signification of the will of God, that he should now forthwith go to such a neighbor town, and as a revelation of that future event, viz. that there he should meet with a further discovery of his duty. If such things as these are revealed by the impression of these words, it is to all intents a new revelation, not the less because certain words of scripture are made use of in the case: here are propositions or truths entirely new,

that are supposed now to be revealed, that those words do not contain in themselves, and that till now there was no revelation of any where to be found in heaven or earth. These propositions, that it is God's mind and will that such a person by name, should arise at such a time, and go from such a place to such a place, and that there he should meet with discoveries, are entirely new propositions, wholly different from the propositions contained in that text of scripture, no more contained, or consequently implied in the words themselves, without a new revelation, than it is implied that he should arise and go to any other place, or that any other person should arise and go to that place. The propositions supposed to be now revealed, are as really different from those contained in that scripture, as they are from the propositions contained in that text, Gen. v. 6., "And Seth lived a hundred and five years, and begat Enos."

This is quite a different thing from the Spirit's enlightening the mind to understand the precepts or propositions of the word of God, and know what is contained and revealed in them, and what consequences may justly be drawn from them, and to see how they are applicable to our case and circumstances; which is done without any new revelation, only by enabling the mind to understand and apply a revelation already made.

Those texts of scripture that speak of the children of God as *led by the Spirit*, have been by some brought to defend a being guided by such impulses; as particularly, those Rom. viii. 14., "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God:" and Gal. v. 18., "But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." But these texts themselves confute them that bring them; for it is evident that the leading of the Spirit that the apostle speaks of is a gracious leading, or what is peculiar to the children of God, and that natural men cannot have; for he speaks of it as a sure evidence of their being the sons of God, and not under the law: but a leading or directing a

person, by immediately revealing to him where he should go, or what shall hereafter come to pass, or what shall be the future consequence of his doing thus or thus, if there be any such thing in these days, is not of the nature of the gracious leading of the Spirit of God, that is peculiar to God's children; it is no more than a common gift; there is nothing in it but what natural men are capable of, and many of them have had in the days of inspiration: a man may have ten thousand such revelations and directions from the Spirit of God, and yet not have a jot of grace in his heart: it is no more than the gift of prophecy, which immediately reveals what will be, or should be hereafter; but this is but a common gift, as the apostle expressly shows, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 8. If a person has any thing revealed to him from God, or is directed to any thing by a voice from heaven, or a whisper, or words immediately suggested and put into his mind, there is nothing of the nature of grace merely in this; it is of the nature of a common influence of the Spirit, and is but dross and dung, in comparison of the excellency of that gracious leading of the Spirit that the saints have. Such a way of being directed where one shall go, and what he shall do, is no more than what Balaam had from God, who from time to time revealed to him what he should do, and when he had done one thing, then directed him what he should do next; so that he was in this sense led by the Spirit, for a considerable time. There is *a more excellent way* that the Spirit of God leads *the sons of God*, that natural men cannot have, and that is, by inclining them to do the will of God, and go in the shining path of truth and Christian holiness, from a holy, heavenly disposition, which the Spirit of God gives them, and enlivens in them, which inclines them, and leads them to those things that are excellent, and agreeable to God's mind, whereby they "are transformed, by the renewing of their minds, and prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," as in Rom. xii. 2. And so the Spirit of God does in a gracious manner teach the

saints their duty; and teaches them in a higher manner than ever Balaam, or Saul, or Judas were taught, or any natural man is capable of while such. The Spirit of God enlightens them with respect to their duty, by making their eye single and pure, whereby the whole body is full of light. The sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God rectifies the taste of the soul, whereby it savors those things that are of God, and naturally relishes and delights in those things that are holy and agreeable to God's mind, and like one of a distinguishing taste, chooses those things that are good and wholesome, and rejects those things that are evil; for the sanctified ear tries words, and the sanctified heart tries actions, as the mouth tastes meat. And thus the Spirit of God leads and guides the meek in his way, agreeable to his promises; he enables them to understand the commands and counsels of his word, and rightly to apply them. Christ blames the Pharisees that they had not this holy distinguishing taste, to discern and distinguish what was right and wrong. Luke xii. 57. "Yea, and why, even of your own selves, judge ye not what is right?"

The leading of the Spirit which God gives his children, which is peculiar to them, is that teaching them his statutes, and causing them to understand the way of his precepts, which the psalmist so very often prays for, especially in the 119th psalm; and not in giving of them *new statutes*, and *new precepts:* he graciously gives them eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand; he causes them to understand the fear of the Lord, and so brings the blind by a way they knew not, and leads them in paths that they had not known, and makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.

So the assistance of the Spirit in praying and preaching, seems by some to have been greatly misunderstood, and they have sought after a miraculous assistance of inspiration, by immediate suggesting of words to them, by such gifts and influences of the Spirit, in praying and teaching, as the

apostle speaks of, 1 Cor. xiv. 14, 26. (which many natural men had in those days), instead of a gracious holy assistance of the Spirit of God, which is the far *more excellent way* (as 1 Cor. xii. 31., and xiii. 1). The gracious and most excellent kind assistance of the Spirit of God in praying and preaching, is not by immediate suggesting of words to the apprehension, which may be with a cold, dead heart, but by warming the heart, and filling it with a great sense of those things that are to be spoken of, and with holy affections, that that sense and those affections may suggest words. Thus indeed the Spirit of God may be said indirectly and mediately to suggest words to us, to indite our petitions for us, and to teach the preacher what to say; he fills the heart, and that fills the mouth; as we know that when men are greatly affected in any matter, and their hearts are very full, it fills them with matter for speech, and makes them eloquent upon that subject; and much more have spiritual affections this tendency, for many reasons that might be given. When a person is in a holy and lively frame in secret prayer, it will wonderfully supply him with matter, and with expressions, as every true Christian knows; and so it will fill his mouth in Christian conversation, and it has the like tendency to enable a person in public prayer and preaching. And if he has these holy influences of the Spirit on his heart in a high degree, nothing in the world will have so great a tendency to make both the matter and manner of his public performances excellent and profitable. But since there is no immediate suggesting of words from the Spirit of God to be expected or desired, they who neglect and despise study and premeditation, in order to a preparation for the pulpit, in such an expectation, are guilty of presumption; though doubtless it may be lawful for some persons, in some cases, (and they may be called to it) to preach with very little study; and the Spirit of God, by the heavenly frame of heart that he gives them, may enable them to do it to excellent purpose.

Besides this most excellent way of the Spirit of God, in assisting ministers in public performances, which (considered as the preacher's privilege) far excels inspiration, there is a common assistance which natural men may have in these days, and which the godly may have intermingled with a gracious assistance, which is also very different from inspiration, and that is his assisting natural principles; as his assisting the natural apprehension, reason, memory, conscience, and natural affection.

But to return to the head of impressions and immediate revelations; many lay themselves open to a delusion by expecting direction from heaven in this way, and waiting for it: in such a case it is easy for persons to imagine that they have it. They are perhaps at a loss concerning something, undetermined what they shall do, or what course they should take in some affair, and they pray to God to direct them, and make known to them his mind and will; and then, instead of expecting to be directed, by being assisted in consideration of the rules of God's word, and their circumstances, and God's providence, and enabled to look on things in a true light, and justly to weigh them, they are waiting for some secret immediate influence on their minds, unaccountably swaying their minds, and turning their thoughts or inclinations that way that God would have them go, and are observing their own minds, to see what arises there, whether some texts of scripture do not come into the mind, or whether some ideas, or inward motions and dispositions do not arise in something of an unaccountable manner, that they may call a divine direction. Hereby they are exposed to two things. First, they lay themselves open to the devil, and give him a fair opportunity to lead them where he pleases; for they stand ready to follow the first extraordinary impulse that they shall have, groundlessly concluding it is from God. And secondly, they are greatly exposed to be deceived by their own imaginations; for such an expectation awakens and quickens the imagination: and that often-

times is called an uncommon impression, that is no such thing ; and they ascribe that to the agency of some invisible being, that is owing only to themselves.

Again, another way that many have been deceived, is by drawing false conclusions from true premises. Many true and eminent saints have been led into mistakes and snares, by arguing too much from that, that they have prayed in faith ; and that oftentimes when the premises are true, they have indeed been greatly assisted in prayer for such a particular mercy, and have had the true spirit of prayer in exercise, in their asking it of God ; but they have concluded more from these premises than is a just consequence from them : that they have thus prayed is a sure sign that their prayer is accepted and heard, and that God will give a gracious answer, according to his own wisdom, and that the particular thing that was asked shall be given, or that which is equivalent ; this is a just consequence from it ; but it is not inferred by any new revelation now made, but by the revelation that is made in God's word, the promises made to the prayer of faith in the holy scriptures : but that God will answer them in that individual thing that they ask, if it be not a thing promised in God's word, or they do not certainly know that it is that which will be most for the good of God's church, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom and glory, nor whether it will be best for them, is more than can be justly concluded from it. If God remarkably meets with one of his children while he is praying for a particular mercy of great importance, for himself, or some other person, or any society of men, and does by the influences of his Spirit greatly humble him, and empty him of himself in his prayer, and manifests himself remarkably in his excellency, sovereignty, and his all-sufficient power and grace in Jesus Christ, and does in a remarkable manner enable the person to come to him for that mercy, poor in spirit, and with humble resignation to God, and with a great degree of faith in the divine sufficiency, and the sufficiency of Christ's mediation, that

person has indeed a great deal the more reason to hope that God will grant that mercy, than otherwise he would have; the greater probability is justly inferred from that, agreeably to the promises of the holy scripture, that the prayer is accepted and heard; and it is much more probable that a prayer that is heard will be returned with the particular mercy that is asked, than one that is not heard. And there is no reason at all to doubt, but that God does sometimes especially enable to the exercises of faith, when the minds of his saints are engaged in thoughts of and prayer for some particular blessing they greatly desire; i. e. God is pleased especially to give them a believing frame, a sense of his fullness, and a spirit of humble dependence on him, at such times as when they are thinking of and praying for that mercy, more than for other mercies; he gives them a particular sense of his ability to do that thing, and of the sufficiency of his power to overcome such and such obstacles, and the sufficiency of his mercy, and of the blood of Christ, for the removal of the guilt that is in the way of the bestowment of such a mercy in particular. When this is the case, it makes the probability still much greater, that God intends to bestow the particular mercy sought, in his own time, and his own way. But here is nothing of the nature of a revelation in the case, but only a drawing rational conclusions from the particular manner and circumstances of the ordinary gracious influences of God's Spirit. And as God is pleased sometimes to give his saints particular exercises of faith in his sufficiency, with regard to particular mercies they seek, so he is sometimes pleased to make use of his word in order to it, and helps the actings of faith with respect to such a mercy, by texts of scripture that do especially exhibit the sufficiency of God's power or mercy, in such a like case, or speak of such a manner of the exercise of God's strength and grace. The strengthening of their faith in God's sufficiency in this case is therefore a just improvement of such scriptures; it is no more than what those scriptures, as they

stand in the Bible, do hold forth just cause for. But to take them as new whispers or revelations from heaven, is not making a just improvement of them. If persons have thus a spirit of prayer remarkably given them, concerning a particular mercy, from time to time, so as evidently to be assisted to act faith in God, in that particular, in a very distinguishing manner, the argument in some cases may be very strong that God does design to grant that mercy, not from any revelation now made of it, but from such a kind and manner of the ordinary influence of his Spirit, with respect to that thing.

But here a great deal of caution and circumspection must be used in drawing inferences of this nature: there are many ways persons may be misled and deluded. The ground on which some expect that they shall receive the thing they have asked for, is rather a strong imagination, than any true humble faith in the divine sufficiency. They have a strong persuasion that the thing asked shall be granted, (which they can give no reason for,) without any remarkable discovery of that glory and fullness of God and Christ, that is the ground of faith. And sometimes the confidence that persons have that their prayers shall be answered, is only a self-righteous confidence, and no true faith: they have a high conceit of themselves as eminent saints, and special favorites of God, and have also a high conceit of the prayers they have made, because they were much enlarged and affected in them; and hence they are positive in it that the thing will come to pass. And sometimes when once they have conceived such a notion, they grow stronger and stronger in it; and this they think is from an immediate divine hand upon their minds to strengthen their confidence; whereas it is only by their dwelling in their minds on their own excellency, and high experiences, and great assistances, whereby they look brighter and brighter in their own eyes. Hence it is found by observation and experience, that nothing in the

world exposes so much to enthusiasm, as spiritual pride and self-righteousness.

In order to drawing a just inference from the supposed assistance we have had in prayer for a particular mercy, and judging of the probability of the bestowment of that individual mercy, many things must be considered. We must consider the importance of the mercy sought, and the principle whence we so earnestly desire it; how far it is good, and agreeable to the mind and will of God; the degree of love to God that we exercised in our prayer; the degree of discovery that is made of the divine sufficiency, and the degree in which our assistance is manifestly distinguishing with respect to that mercy. And there is nothing of greater importance in the argument than the degree of humility, poverty of spirit, self-emptiness, and resignation to the holy will of God, which God gives us the exercise of in our seeking that mercy: praying for a particular mercy with much of these things, I have often seen blessed with a remarkable bestowment of the particular thing asked for.

From what has been said, we may see which way God may, only by the ordinary gracious influences of his Spirit, sometimes give his saints special reason to hope for the bestowment of a particular mercy they desire and have prayed for, and which we may suppose he oftentimes gives eminent saints, that have great degrees of humility, and much communion with God. And here, I humbly conceive, some eminent servants of Jesus Christ that have appeared in the church of God, that we read of in ecclesiastical story, have been led into a mistake; and through want of distinguishing such things as these from immediate revelations, have thought that God has favored them, in some instances, with the same kind of divine influences that the apostles and prophets had of old.

Another erroneous principle that some have embraced, that has been a source of many errors in their conduct, is, that persons ought always to do whatsoever the Spirit of

God (though but indirectly) inclines them to. Indeed the Spirit of God in itself is infinitely perfect, and all his immediate actings, simply considered, are perfect, and there can be nothing wrong in them; and therefore all that the Spirit of God inclines us to directly and immediately, without the intervention of any other cause that shall pervert and misimprove what is from the Spirit of God, ought to be done; but there may be many things that we may be disposed to do, which disposition may indirectly be from the Spirit of God, that we ought not to do. The disposition in general may be good, and be from the Spirit of God, but the particular determination of that disposition, as to particular actions, objects, and circumstances, may be ill, and not from the Spirit of God, but may be from the intervention or interposition of some infirmity, blindness, inadvertence, deceit, or corruption of ours; so that although the disposition, in general, ought to be allowed and promoted, and all those actings of it that are simply from God's Spirit, yet the particular ill direction, or determination of that disposition which is from some other cause, ought not to be followed.

As for instance: the Spirit of God may cause a person to have a dear love to another, and so a great desire of delight in his comfort, ease, and pleasure: this disposition, in general, is good, and ought to be followed; but yet through the intervention of indiscretion, or some other bad cause, it may be ill directed, and have a bad determination, as to particular acts; and the person indirectly, through that real love that he has to his neighbor, may kill him with kindness; he may do that out of sincere good will to him, that may tend to ruin him. A good disposition may, through some inadvertence or delusion, strongly incline a person to that, which if he saw all things as they are, would be most contrary to that disposition. The true loyalty of a general, and his zeal for the honor of his prince, may exceedingly animate him in war; but yet this that is a good disposition, through indiscretion and mistake, may push him forward to those things

that give the enemy great advantage, and may expose him and his army to ruin, and may tend to the ruin of his master's interest.

The apostle does evidently suppose that the Spirit of God, in his extraordinary, immediate, and miraculous influences on men's minds, may in some respect excite inclinations in men, that if gratified, would tend to confusion, and therefore must sometimes be restrained, and in their exercise, must be under the government of discretion. 1 Cor. xiv. 31, 32, 33. "For ye may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." Here, by *the spirits of the prophets*, according to the known phraseology of the apostle, is meant the Spirit of God acting in the prophets, according to those special gifts with which each one was endowed. And here it is plainly implied that the Spirit of God, thus operating in them, may be an occasion of their having sometimes an inclination to do that, in the exercise of those gifts, which it was not proper, decent, or profitable that they should; and that therefore the inclination, though indirectly from the Spirit of God, should be restrained, and that it ought to be subject to the discretion of the prophets, as to the particular time and circumstances of its exercise.

I can make no doubt but that it is possible for a minister to have given him by the Spirit of God, such a sense of the importance of eternal things, and of the misery of mankind, that are so many of them exposed to eternal destruction, together with such a love to souls, that he might find in himself a disposition to spend all his time, day and night, in warning, exhorting, and calling upon men, and so that he must be obliged, as it were, to do violence to himself ever to refrain, so as to give himself any opportunity to eat, drink, or sleep. And so I believe there may be a disposition in like manner, indirectly excited in lay persons, through the inter-

vention of their infirmity, to do what only belongs to ministers. Yea, to do those things that would not become either ministers or people: through the influence of the Spirit of God, together with want of discretion, and some remaining corruption, women and children might feel themselves inclined to break forth and scream aloud, to great congregations, warning and exhorting the whole multitude, and to go forth and halloo and scream in the streets, or to leave the families they belong to, and go from house to house, earnestly exhorting others; but yet it would by no means follow that it was their duty to do these things, or that they would not have a tendency to do ten times as much hurt as good.

Another wrong principle from whence have arisen errors in conduct, is, that whatsoever is found to be of present and immediate benefit, may and ought to be practiced, without looking forward to future consequences. Some persons seem to think that it sufficiently justifies any thing that they say or do, that it is found to be for their present edification, and the edification of those that are with them; it assists and promotes their present affection, and therefore they think they should not concern themselves about future consequences, but leave them with God. Indeed, in things that are in themselves our duty, being required by moral rules, or absolute positive commands of God, they must be done, and future consequences must be left with God; our election and discretion takes no place here: but in other things we are to be governed by discretion, and must not only look at the present good, but our view must be extensive, and we must look at the consequences of things. It is the duty of ministers especially to exercise this discretion: in things wherein they are not determined by an absolute rule, and that are not enjoined them by a wisdom superior to their own, Christ has left them to their own discretion, with that general rule, that they should exercise the utmost wisdom they can obtain, in pursuing that which, upon the best view of the consequences of things they can get, will tend most to the ad-

vancement of his kingdom. This is implied in those words of Christ to his disciples, when he sent them forth to preach the gospel, Mat. x. 16. "Be ye wise as serpents." The scripture always represents the work of a gospel minister by those employments that do especially require a wise foresight of and provision for future events and consequences. So it is compared to the business of a steward, that is, a business that in an eminent manner requires forecast, and a wise laying in of provision, for the supply of the needs of the family, according to its future necessities; and a good minister is called a wise steward: so it is compared to the business of a husbandman, that almost wholly consists in those things that are done with a view to the future fruits and consequences of his labor: the husbandman's discretion and forecast is eloquently set forth in Isa. xxviii. 24, 25, 26. "Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow? Doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye, in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him." So the work of the ministry is compared to that of a wise builder or architect, who has a long reach, and comprehensive view; and for whom it is necessary, that when he begins a building, he should have at once a view of the whole frame, and all the future parts of the structure, even to the pinnacle, that all may be fitly framed together. So also it is compared to the business of a trader or merchant, who is to gain by trading with the money that he begins with: this also is a business that exceedingly requires forecast, and without it, is never like to be followed with any success, for any long time: so it is represented by the business of a fisherman, which depends on craft and subtlety: it is also compared to the business of a soldier that goes to war, which is a business that perhaps above any other secular business,

requires great foresight, and a wise provision for future events and consequences.

And particularly ministers ought not to be careless how much they discompose and ruffle the minds of those that they esteem natural men, or how great an uproar they raise in the carnal world, and so lay blocks in the way of the propagation of religion. This certainly is not to follow the example of that zealous apostle Paul, who, though he would not depart from his enjoined duty to please carnal men, yet wherein he might with a good conscience, did exceedingly lay out himself to please them, and if possible to avoid raising in the multitude prejudices, oppositions, and tumults, against the gospel ; and looked upon it that it was of great consequence that it should be if possible avoided. 1 Cor. x. 32, 33. "Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God : even as I please all men, in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." Yea, he declares that he laid himself out so much for this, that he made himself a kind of a servant to all sorts of men, conforming to their customs and various humors, in every thing wherein he might, even in things that were very burdensome to him, that he might not fright men away from Christianity, and cause them to stand, as it were, braced and armed against it, but on the contrary, if possible, might with condescension and friendship win and draw them to it ; as you may see, 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. And agreeable hereto, are the directions he gives to others, both ministers and people : so he directs the Christian Romans "not to please themselves, but every one please his neighbor, for his good, to edification," Rom. xv. 1, 2. "And to follow after the things that make for peace," chap. xiv. 19. And he presses it in terms exceeding strong, Rom. xii. 18. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." And he directs ministers to endeavor if possible to gain opposers by a meek condescending treatment, avoiding all appearance

of strife or fierceness, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25, 26. To the like purpose the same apostle directs Christians to "walk in wisdom towards them that are without," Eph. iv. 5. And to avoid giving offense to others, if we can, "that our good may not be evil spoken of," Rom. xiv. 16. So that it is evident that the great and most zealous and most successful propagator of vital religion that ever was, looked upon it to be of great consequence to endeavor, as much as possible, by all the methods of lawful meekness and gentleness, to avoid raising the prejudice and opposition of the world against religion. When we have done our utmost there will be opposition enough against vital religion, against which the carnal mind of man has such an enmity; (we should not therefore needlessly increase and raise that enmity) as in the apostle's days, though he took so much pains to please men, yet because he was faithful and thorough in his work, persecution almost every where was raised against him.

A fisherman is careful not needlessly to ruffle and disturb the water, lest he should drive the fish away from his net; but he will rather endeavor, if possible, to draw them into it. Such a fisherman was the apostle. 2 Cor. xii. 15, 16. "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. But be it so, I did not burden you, nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile."

The necessity of suffering persecution in order to being a true Christian, has undoubtedly by some been carried to an extreme, and the doctrine has been abused. It has been looked upon necessary to uphold a man's credit amongst others as a Christian, that he should be persecuted. I have heard it made an objection against the sincerity of particular persons, that they were no more hated and reproached. And the manner of glorying in persecution, or the cross of Christ, has in some been very wrong, so as has had too much an appearance of lifting up themselves in it, that they were very much hated and reviled, more than most, as an evidence of

their excelling others, in being good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Such an improvement of the doctrine of the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and of the necessity of persecution, becoming credible and customary, has a direct tendency to cause those that would be accounted true Christians, to behave themselves so towards those that are not well affected to religion, as to provoke their hatred, or at least to be but little careful to avoid it, and not very studiously and earnestly to strive (after the apostle's example and precepts) to please them to their edification, and by meekness and gentleness to win them, and by all possible means to live peaceably with them.

I believe that saying of our Savior, *I came not to send peace on earth, but division*, has been abused; as though when we see great strife and division arise about religion, and violent heats of spirit against the truly pious, and a loud clamor and uproar against the work of God, it was to be rejoiced in, because it is that which Christ came to send. It has almost been laid down as a maxim by some, that the more division and strife, the better sign; which naturally leads persons to seek it and provoke it, or leads them to and encourages them in such a manner of behavior, such a roughness and sharpness, or such an affected neglect, as has a natural tendency to raise prejudice and opposition; instead of striving, as the apostle did to his utmost, by all meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of behavior, to prevent or assuage it. Christ came to send a sword on earth, and to cause division, no otherwise than he came to send damnation; for Christ, that is set for the glorious restoration of some, is set for the fall of others, and to be a stone of stumbling, and rock of offense to them, and an occasion of their vastly more aggravated and terrible damnation; and this is always the consequence of a great outpouring of the Spirit and revival of vital religion; it is the means of the salvation of some, and the more aggravated damnation of others. But certainly this is no just argument, that men's exposedness to

damnation is not to be lamented, or that we should not exert ourselves to our utmost, in all the methods that we can devise, that others might be saved, and to avoid all such behavior towards them as tends to lead them down to hell.

I know there is naturally a great enmity in the heart of man against vital religion ; and I believe there would have been a great deal of opposition against this glorious work of God in New England, if the subjects and promoters of it had behaved themselves never so agreeably to Christian rules ; and I believe if this work goes on and spreads much in the world, so as to begin to shake kingdoms and nations, it will dreadfully stir up the rage of earth and hell, and will put the world into the greatest uproar that ever it was in since it stood ; I believe Satan's dying struggles will be the most violent : but yet I believe a great deal might be done to restrain this opposition, by a good conformity to that of the apostle James, Jam. iii. 13. " Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge ? Let him show out of a good conversation, his works, with meekness of wisdom." And I also believe that if the rules of Christian charity, meekness, gentleness, and prudence, had been duly observed by the generality of the zealous promoters of this work, it would have made three times the progress that it has ; i. e. if it had pleased God in such a case, to give a blessing to means in proportion as he has done.

Under this head of carelessness of the future consequences of things, it may be proper to say something of introducing things new and strange, and that have a tendency by their novelty to shock and surprise people. Nothing can be more evident from the New Testament, than that such things ought to be done with great caution and moderation, to avoid the offense that may be thereby given, and the prejudices that might be raised, to clog and hinder the progress of religion : Yea, that it ought to be thus in things that are in themselves good and excellent, and of great weight, provided they are not things that are of the nature of absolute duty,

which, though they may appear to be innovations, yet cannot be neglected without immorality or disobedience to the commands of God. What great caution and moderation did the apostles use in introducing things that were new, and abolishing things that were old, in their day? How gradual were the ceremonial performances of the law of Moses removed and abolished among the Christian Jews? And how long did even the apostle Paul himself conform to those ceremonies which he calls weak and beggarly elements? Yea, even the rite of circumcision, (Acts xvi. 3.) that he speaks so much in his epistles of the worthlessness of, that he might not prejudice the Jews against Christianity? So it seems to have been very gradually that the Jewish sabbath was abolished, and the Christian sabbath introduced, for the same reason. And the apostles avoided teaching the Christians in those early days, at least for a great while, some high and excellent divine truths, because they could not bear them yet. 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. Heb. v. 11. to the end. Thus strictly did the apostles observe the rule that their blessed Master gave them, of not putting new wine into old bottles, lest they should burst the bottles, and lose the wine. And how did Christ himself, while on earth, forbear so plainly to teach his disciples the great doctrines of Christianity, concerning his satisfaction, and the nature and manner of a sinner's justification and reconciliation with God, and the particular benefits of his death, resurrection, and ascension, because in that infant state the disciples were then in, their minds were not prepared for such instructions; and therefore the more clear and full revelation of these things was reserved for the time when their minds should be further enlightened and strengthened by the outpouring of the Spirit after his ascension. John xvi. 12, 13. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now: howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." And Mark iv. 33. "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to bear it." These

things might be enough to convince any one, that does not think himself wiser than Christ and his apostles, that great prudence and caution should be used in introducing things into the church of God, that are very uncommon, though in themselves they may be very excellent, lest by our rashness and imprudent haste we hinder religion much more than we help it.

Persons that are influenced by an indiscreet zeal are always in too much haste; they are impatient of delays, and therefore are for jumping to the uppermost step first, before they have taken the preceding steps; whereby they expose themselves to fall and break their bones. It is a thing very taking with them to see the building rise very high, and all their endeavor and strength is employed in advancing the building in height, without taking care withal proportionably to enlarge the bottom; whereby the whole is in danger of coming to the ground; or they are for putting on the cupola and pinnacle before they are come to it, or before the lower parts of the building are done; which tends at once to put a stop to the building, and hinder its ever being a complete structure. Many that are thus imprudent and hasty with their zeal, have a real eager appetite for that which is good; but are like children, that are impatient to wait for the fruit till the proper season of it, and therefore snatch it before it is ripe: Oftentimes in their haste they overshoot their mark, and frustrate their own end; they put that which they would obtain further out of reach than it was before, and establish and confirm that which they would remove. Things must have time to ripen: The prudent husbandman waits till he has received the former and the latter rain, and till the harvest is ripe, before he reaps. We are now just as it were beginning to recover out of a dreadful disease that we have been long under; and to feed a man recovering from a fever with strong meat at once, is the ready way to kill him. The reformation from popery was much hindered by this hasty zeal: Many were for immediately rectifying all disorders by force,

which were condemned by Luther, and were a great trouble to him. See Sleiden's history of the reformation, p. 52, &c. and book v. throughout. It is a vain prejudice that some have lately imbibed against such rules of prudence and moderation: they will be forced to come to them at last; they will find themselves that they are not able to maintain their cause without them; and if they will not hearken before, experience will convince them at last, when it will be too late for them to rectify their mistake.

Another error, that is of the nature of an erroneous principle, that some have gone upon, is a wrong notion that they have of an attestation of Divine Providence to persons or things. We go too far when we look upon the success that God gives to some persons, in making them the instruments of doing much good, as a testimony of God's approbation of those persons and all the courses they take. It is a main argument that has been made use of to defend the conduct of some of those ministers, that have been blamed as imprudent and irregular, that God has smiled upon them and blessed them, and given them great success, and that however men charge them as guilty of many wrong things, yet it is evident that God is with them, and then who can be against them? And probably some of those ministers themselves, by this very means, have had their ears stopped against all that has been said to convince them of their misconduct. But there are innumerable ways that persons may be misled, in forming a judgment of the mind and will of God, from the events of Providence. If a person's success be a reward of something that God sees in him, that he approves of, yet it is no argument that he approves of every thing in him. Who can tell how far the divine grace may go in greatly rewarding some small good that he sees in a person, a good meaning, something good in his disposition, while he at the same time, in sovereign mercy, hides his eyes from a great deal that is bad, that it is his pleasure to forgive, and not to mark against the person, though in itself it be very ill? God has not told us

after what manner he will proceed in this matter, and we go upon most uncertain grounds when we undertake to determine. It is an exceeding difficult thing to know how far love or hatred are exercised towards persons or actions, by all that is before us. God was pleased in his sovereignty to give such success to Jacob in that, which from beginning to end, was a deceitful, lying contrivance and proceeding of his, that in that way he obtained that blessing that was worth infinitely more than the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven, that was given to Esau, in his blessing, yea, worth more than all that the world can afford. God was for a while with Judas, so that he, by God's power accompanying him, wrought miracles and cast out devils; but this could not justly be interpreted as God's approbation of his person, or his thievery, that he lived in at the same time.

The dispensations and events of Providence, with their reasons, are too little understood by us, to be improved by us as our rule, instead of God's word; *'God has his way in the sea, and his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known, and he gives us no account of any of his matters;* and therefore we cannot safely take the events of his providence as a revelation of his mind concerning a person's conduct and behavior, we have no warrant so to do, God has never appointed those things, but something else to be our rule; we have but one rule to go by, and that is his holy word, and when we join any thing else with it as having the force of a rule, we are guilty of that which is strictly forbidden, Deut. iv. 2. Prov. xxx. 6. and Rev. xxii. 18. They who make what they imagine is pointed forth to them in providence, their rule of behavior, do err, as well as those that follow impulses and impressions; we should put nothing in the room of the word of God. It is to be feared that some have been greatly confirmed and emboldened by the great success that God has given them, in some things that have really been contrary to the rules of God's holy word. If it has been so, they have been guilty of presumption, and

abusing God's kindness to them, and the great honor he has put upon them: they have seen that God was with them, and made them victorious in their preaching; and this it is to be feared has been abused by some to a degree of self-confidence; it has much taken off all jealousy of themselves; they have been bold therefore to go great lengths, in a presumption that God was with them, and would defend them, and finally baffle all that found fault with them.

Indeed there is a voice of God in his providence, that may be interpreted and well understood by the rule of his word; and providence may to our dark minds and weak faith, confirm the word of God, as it fulfills it: but to improve Divine Providence thus, is quite a different thing from making a rule of providence. There is a good use may be made of the events of providence, of our own observation and experience, and human histories, and the opinion of the fathers, and other eminent men; but finally all must be brought to *one rule*, viz. the word of God, and that must be regarded as our *only rule*.

Nor do I think that they go upon sure ground, that conclude that they have not been in an error in their conduct, because that at the time of their doing a thing, for which they have been blamed and reproached by others, they were favored with special comforts of God's Spirit. God's bestowing special spiritual mercies on a person at such a time, is no sign that he approves of every thing that he sees in him at that time. David had very much of the presence of God while he lived in polygamy: and Solomon had some very high favors, and peculiar smiles of Heaven, and particularly at the dedication of the temple, while he greatly multiplied wives to himself, and horses, and silver, and gold; all contrary to the most express command of God to the king, in the law of Moses, Deut. xvii. 16, 17. We cannot tell how far God may hide his eyes from beholding iniquity in Jacob, and seeing perverseness in Israel. We cannot tell what are the reasons of God's actions any further than he interprets for himself.

God sometimes gave some of the primitive Christians, the extraordinary influence of his Spirit, when they were out of the way of their duty; and continued it, while they were abusing it; as is plainly implied, 1 Cor. xiv. 31, 32, 33.

Yea, if a person has done a thing for which he is reproached, and that reproach be an occasion of his feeling sweet exercises of grace in his soul, and that from time to time, I do not think that is a certain evidence that God approves of the thing he is blamed for. For undoubtedly a mistake may be the occasion of stirring up the exercise of grace, in a man that has grace. If a person, through mistake, thinks he has received some particular great mercy, that mistake may be the occasion of stirring up the sweet exercises of love to God, and true thankfulness and joy in God. As for instance, if one that is full of love of God should hear credible tidings, concerning a remarkable deliverance of a child, or other dear friend, or of some glorious thing done for the city of God, no wonder if, on such an occasion, the sweet actings of love to God, and delight in God should be excited, though indeed afterwards it should prove a false report that he heard. So if one that loves God, is much maligned and reproached for doing that which he thinks God required and approves, no wonder that it is sweet to such a one to think that God is his friend, though men are his enemies; no wonder at all, that this is an occasion of his, as it were, leaving the world, and sweetly betaking himself to God, as his sure friend, and finding sweet complácence in God; though he be indeed in a mistake, concerning that which he thought was agreeable to God's will. As I have before shown that the exercise of a truly good affection, may be the occasion of error, and may indirectly incline a person to do that which is wrong; so on the other hand, error, or a doing that which is wrong, may be an occasion of the exercise of a truly good affection. The reason of it is this, that however all exercises of grace be from the Spirit of God, yet the Spirit of God dwells and acts in the hearts of the saints, in some measure after the manner of

a vital, natural principle, a principle of new nature in them; whose exercises are excited by means, in some measure as other natural principles are. Though grace be not in the saints, as a *mere natural principle*, but as a sovereign agent, and so its exercises are not *tied to means*, by an immutable law of nature, as in mere natural principles; yet God has so constituted, that grace should dwell so in the hearts of the saints, that its exercise should have some degree of connection with means, after the manner of a principle of nature.

Another erroneous principle that there has been something of, and that has been an occasion of some mischief and confusion, is that external order in matters of religion, and use of the means of grace, is but little to be regarded; it is spoken lightly of under the names of ceremonies and dead forms, &c. And is probable the more despised by some because their opposers insist so much upon it, and because they are so continually hearing from them the cry of *disorder and confusion*. It is objected against the importance of external order that God does not look at the outward form, he looks at the heart: but that is a weak argument against its importance, that true godliness does not consist in it; for it may be equally made use of against all the outward means of grace whatsoever. True godliness does not consist in ink and paper, but yet that would be a foolish objection against the importance of ink and paper in religion, when without it we could not have the word of God. If any external means at all are needful, any outward actions of a public nature, or wherein God's people are jointly concerned in public society, without doubt external order is needful: the management of an external affair that is public, or wherein a multitude is concerned without order, is in every thing found impossible. Without order there can be no general direction of a multitude to any particular designed end, their purposes will cross one another, and they will not help but hinder one another. A multitude cannot act in union one with another without order; confusion separates and divides them, so that there can be no

concert or agreement. If a multitude would help one another in any affair, they must unite themselves one to another in a regular subordination of members, in some measure as it is in the natural body; by this means they will be in some capacity to act with united strength: and thus Christ has appointed that it should be in the visible church, as 1 Cor. xii. 14. to the end, and Rom. xii. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Zeal without order will do but little, or at least it will be effectual but a little while. Let a company that are very zealous against the enemy, go forth to war, without any manner of order, every one rushing forward as his zeal shall drive him, all in confusion, if they gain something at first onset, by surprising the enemy, yet how soon do they come to nothing, and fall an easy, helpless prey to their adversaries? Order is one of the most necessary of all external means of the spiritual good of God's church; and therefore it is requisite even in heaven itself where there is the least need of any external means of grace; order is maintained amongst the glorious angels there. And the necessity of it in order to the carrying on any design, wherein a multitude are concerned, is so great, that even the devils in hell are driven to something of it, that they may carry on the designs of their kingdom. And it is very observable, that those kinds of irrational creatures, for whom it is needful that they should act in union and join a multitude together, to carry on any work for their preservation, they do by a wonderful instinct that God has put into them, observe and maintain a most regular and exact order among themselves; such as bees and some others. And order in the visible church is not only necessary to the carrying on the designs of Christ's glory and the church's prosperity, but it is absolutely necessary to its defense; without it, it is like a city without walls, and can be in no capacity to defend itself from any kind of mischief: and so however it be an external thing, yet is not to be despised on that account; for though it be not the food of souls, yet it is in some respect their defense. The people of Holland would be very foolish to despise the

dikes that keep out the sea from overwhelming them, under the names of dead stones and vile earth, because the matter of which they are built is not good to eat.

It seems to be partly on the foundation of this notion of the worthlessness of external order, that some have seemed to act on that principle, that the power of judging and openly censuring others should not be reserved in the hands of particular persons, or consistories appointed thereto, but ought to be left at large, for any body that pleases to take it upon them, or that think themselves fit for it; but more of this afterwards.

On this foundation also, an orderly attending on the stated worship of God in families, has been made too light of; and it has been in some places too much of a common and customary thing to be absent from family worship, and to be abroad late in the night at religious meetings, or to attend religious conversation. Not but that this may be, on certain extraordinary occasions; I have seen the case to be such in many instances, that I have thought did afford sufficient warrant for persons to be absent from family prayer, and to be from home till very late in the night: but we should take heed that this does not become a custom or common practice; if it should be so, we shall soon find the consequences to be very ill.

It seems to be on the same foundation of the supposed unprofitableness of external order, that it has been thought by some, that there is no need that such and such religious services and performances should be limited to any certain office in the church; (of which more afterwards.) And also that those offices themselves, as particularly that of the gospel ministry, need not be limited as it used to be, to persons of a liberal education; but some of late have been for having others that they have supposed to be persons of eminent experience, publicly licensed to preach, yea, and ordained to the work of the ministry; and some ministers have seemed to favor such a thing: but how little do they seem to look for-

ward, and consider the unavoidable consequences of opening such a door? If once it should become a custom, or a thing generally approved and allowed of, to admit persons to the work of the ministry that have had no education for it, because of their remarkable experiences, and being persons of good understanding, how many lay persons would soon appear as candidates for the work of the ministry? I doubt not but that I have been acquainted with scores that would have desired it. And how shall we know where to stop? If one is admitted because his experiences are remarkable, another will think his experiences also remarkable; and we perhaps shall not be able to deny but that they are near as great: if one is admitted because, besides experiences, he has good natural abilities, another by himself, and many of his neighbors, may be thought equal to him. It will be found of absolute necessity that there should be some certain, visible limits fixed, to avoid bringing odium upon ourselves, and breeding uneasiness and strife amongst others; and I know of none better, and indeed no other that can well be fixed, than those that the prophet Zechariah fixes, viz. that those only should be appointed to be pastors or shepherds in God's church, that *have been taught to keep cattle from their youth*, or that have had an education for that purpose. Those ministers that have a disposition to break over these limits, if they should do so, and make a practice of it, would break down that fence, which they themselves after a while, after they have been wearied with the ill consequences, would be glad to have somebody else build up for them. Not but that there may probably be some persons in the land, that have had no education at college, that are in themselves better qualified for the work of the ministry than some others that have taken their degrees, and are now ordained. But yet I believe the breaking over those bounds that have hitherto been set, in ordaining such persons, would in its consequences be a greater calamity, than the missing such persons in the work of the ministry. The opening a door for the

admission of unlearned men to the work of the ministry, though they should be persons of extraordinary experience, would, on some accounts, be especially prejudicial at such a day as this; because such persons, for want of an extensive knowledge, are oftentimes forward to lead others into those things, which a people are in danger of at such a time, above all other times, viz. impulses, vain imaginations, superstition, indiscreet zeal, and such like extremes; instead of defending them from them, for which a people especially need a shepherd, at such an extraordinary season.

Another erroneous principle that it seems to me some have been, at least, in danger of, is, that ministers, because they speak as Christ's embassadors, may assume the same style, and speak as with the same authority that the prophets of old did, yea, that Jesus Christ himself did in Mat. xxiii., "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers," &c., and other places; and that not only when they are speaking to the people, but also to their brethren in the ministry; which principle is absurd, because it makes no difference in the different degrees and orders of messengers that God has sent into the world, though God has made a very great difference: for though they all come, in some respect, in the name of God, and with something of his authority, yet certainly there is a vast difference in the degree of authority with which God has invested them. Jesus Christ was one that was sent into the world as God's messenger, and so was one of his apostles, and so also is an ordinary pastor of a church; but yet it does not follow, that because Jesus Christ and an ordinary ministsr are both messengers of God, that therefore an ordinary minister in his office, is vested with an equal degree of authority, that Christ was in his. As there is a great difference in their authority, and as Christ came as God's messenger, in a vastly higher manner, so another style became him, more authoritative than is proper for us worms of the dust, though we also are messengers of inferior degree. It would be strange if God, when he has made so great a difference in the degree

in which he has invested different messengers with his authority, should make no difference as to the outward appearance and show of authority, in style and behavior, which is proper and fit to be seen in them. Though God has put great honor upon ministers, and they may speak as his embassadors, yet he never intended that they should have the same outward appearance of authority and majesty, either in their behavior or speech, that his Son shall have, when he comes to judgment, at the last day; though both come, in different respects and degrees, in the name of the Lord. Alas! can any thing ever make it enter into the hearts of worms of the dust, that it is fit and suitable that it should be so?

Thus I have considered the two first of those three causes of error in conduct that were mentioned.

SECTION III.

Errors from being ignorant or unobservant of things, by which the devil has a special advantage.

I COME now to the third and last cause of the errors of those that have appeared to be the subjects or zealous promoters of this work, viz. a being ignorant or unobservant of some particular things, by which the devil has special advantage.

And here I would particularly take notice, 1. Of some things with respect to the inward experiences of Christians themselves. And 2. Something with regard to the external effects of experiences.

I. There are three things I would take notice of with regard to the experiences of Christians, by which the devil has many advantages against us.

1. The first thing is the *mixture* there oftentimes is in the experiences of true Christians; whereby when they have truly gracious experiences, and divine and spiritual discoveries and exercises, they have something else mixed with them, besides what is spiritual: there is a mixture of that which is natural, and that which is corrupt, with that which is divine. This is what Christians are liable to in the present exceeding imperfect state: the great imperfection of grace, and feebleness and infancy of the new nature, and the great remains of corruption, together with the circumstances we are in in this world, where we are encompassed all round with what tends to pollute us, exposes to this. And indeed it is not to be supposed that Christians ever have any experiences in this world that are wholly pure, entirely spiritual, without any mixture of what is natural and carnal: the beam of light, as it comes from the fountain of light upon our hearts, is pure, but as it is reflected thence, it is mixt: the seed as sent from heaven and planted in the heart, is pure, but as it springs up out of the heart, is impure; yea there is commonly a much greater mixture, than persons for the most part seem to have any imagination of; I have often thought that the experiences of true Christians are very frequently as it is with some sorts of fruits, that are enveloped in several coverings of thick shells or pods, that are thrown away by him that gathers the fruit, and but a very small part of the whole bulk is the pure kernel, that is good to eat.

The things, of all which there is frequently some mixture with gracious experiences, yea with very great and high experiences, are these three, *human, or natural affection and passion; impressions on the imagination;* and a degree of *self-righteousness* or *spiritual pride*. There is very often with that which is spiritual a great mixture of that affection or passion which arises from natural principles; so that nature has a very great hand in those vehement motions and flights of the passions that appear. Hence the same degrees of divine communications from heaven, shall have vastly different effects, in what outwardly appears, in persons

of different natural tempers. The great mixture of that which is natural with that which is spiritual, is very manifest in the peculiar effects that divine influences have in some certain families, or persons of such a blood, in a distinguishing manner of the operating of the passions and affections, and the manner of the outward expressions of them. I know some remarkable instances of this. The same is also evident by the different effects of divine communications on the same person at different times, and in different circumstances: The novelty of things, or the sudden transition from an opposite extreme, and many other things that might be mentioned, greatly contribute to the raising of the passions. And sometimes there is not only a mixture of that which is common and natural with gracious experience, but even that which is animal, that which is in a great measure from the body, and is properly the result of the animal frame. In what true Christians feel of affections towards God, all is not always purely holy and divine; every thing that is felt in the affections does not arise from spiritual principles, but common and natural principles have a very great hand; an improper self-love may have a great share in the effect. God is not loved for his own sake, or for the excellency and beauty of his own perfections as he ought to be; nor have these things in any wise, that proportion in the effect that they ought to have. So in that love that true Christians have one to another, very often there is a great mixture of what arises from common and natural principles, with grace; and self-love has a great hand: the children of God be not loved purely for Christ's sake, but there may be a great mixture of that natural love that many sects of heretics have boasted of, who have been greatly united one to another, because they were of their company, on their side, against the rest of the world; yea, there may be a mixture of natural love to the opposite sex, with Christian and divine love. So there may be a great mixture in that sorrow for sin that the godly have; and also in their joys; natural principles may greatly contribute to

what is felt, a great many ways, as might easily be shown, would it not make my discourse too lengthy. There is nothing that belongs to Christian experience that is more liable to a corrupt mixture than zeal; though it be an excellent virtue, a heavenly flame, when it is pure: but as it is exercised in those who are so little sanctified, and so little humbled, as we are in the present state, it is very apt to be mixed with human passion, yea with corrupt, hateful affections, pride and uncharitable bitterness, and other things that are not from heaven but from hell.

Another thing that is often mixed with what is spiritual in the experiences of Christians, are, impressions on the imagination; whereby godly persons, together with a spiritual understanding of divine things, and conviction of their reality and certainty, and a strong and deep sense of their excellency or great importance upon their hearts, have strongly impressed on their minds external ideas or images of things. A degree of imagination in such a case, as I have observed elsewhere, is unavoidable, and necessarily arises from human nature, as constituted in the present state; and a degree of imagination is really useful, and often is of great benefit; but when it is in too great a degree, it becomes an impure mixture that is prejudicial. This mixture very often arises from the constitution of the body. It commonly greatly contributes to the other kind of mixture mentioned before, viz. of natural affections and passions; it helps to raise them to a great height.

Another thing that is often mixed with the experiences of true Christians, which is the worst mixture of all, is a degree of self-righteousness or spiritual pride. This is often mixed with the joys of Christians: the joy that they have is not purely the joy of faith, or a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, but is partly a rejoicing in themselves: there is oftentimes in their elevations a looking upon themselves, and a viewing their own high attainments; they rejoice partly because they are taken with their own experiences and great discoveries, which

makes them in their own apprehensions so to excel; and this heightens all their passions, and especially those effects that are more external.

There is a much greater mixture of these things in the experiences of some Christians than others; in some the mixture is so great, as very much to obscure and hide the beauty of grace in them, like a thick smoke that hinders all the shining of the fire.

These things we ought to be well aware of, that we may not take all for gold that glistens, and that we may know what to countenance and encourage, and what to discourage; otherwise Satan will have a vast advantage against us, for he works in the corrupt mixture. Sometimes for want of persons distinguishing the ore from the pure metal, those experiences are most admired by the persons themselves that are the subjects of them, and by others, that are not the most excellent. The great external effects, and vehemence of the passions, and violent agitations of the animal spirits, is sometimes much owing to the corrupt mixture (as is very apparent in some instances), though it be not always so. I have observed a great difference among those that are under high affections, and seem disposed to be earnestly talking to those that are about them; some insist much more, in their talk, on what they behold in God and Christ, the glory of the divine perfections, Christ's beauty and excellency, and wonderful condescension and grace, and their own unworthiness; and the great and infinite obligations that they themselves and others are under to love and serve God: some insist almost wholly on their own high privileges, their assurance of God's love and favor, and the weakness and wickedness of opposers, and how much they are above their reach. The latter may have much of the presence of God, but their experiences do not appear to be so solid and unmixed as the former. And there is a great deal of difference in persons' earnestness in their talk and behavior; in some it seems to come indeed from the fullness of their hearts, and from the

great sense they have of truth, a deep sense of the certainty and infinite greatness, excellency, and importance of divine and eternal things, attended with all appearances of great humility; in others their earnestness seems to arise from a great mixture of human passion, and an undue and intemperate agitation of the spirits, which appears by their earnestness and vehemence not being proportioned to the nature of the subject they insist on, but they are violent in every thing they say, as much when they are talking of things of smaller importance, as when speaking of things of greater weight. I have seen it thus in an instance or two, in which this vehemence at length issued in distraction. And there have been some few instances of a more extraordinary nature still, even of persons finding themselves disposed earnestly to talk and cry out, from an unaccountable kind of bodily pressure, without any extraordinary view of any thing in their minds, or sense of any thing upon their hearts; wherein probably there was the immediate hand of the devil.

II. Another thing by which the devil has great advantage, is the unheeded *defects* there sometimes are in the experiences of true Christians, and those high affections wherein there is much that is truly good.

What I now have respect to is something diverse from that defect, or imperfection of degree, which is in every holy disposition and exercise in this life, in the best of the saints. What I aim at is experiences being especially defective in some particular thing, that ought to be in them; which, though it be not an essential defect, or such a defect as is in the experiences of hypocrites, which renders them utterly vain, monstrous, and altogether abominable to God, yet is such a defect as maims and deforms the experience; the essence of truly Christian experiences is not wanting, but yet that is wanting that is very needful in order to the proper beauty of the image of Christ in such a person's experiences; but things are very much out of a due proportion.

There is indeed much of some things, but at the same time there is so little of some other things that should bear a proportion, that the defect very much deforms the Christian, and is truly odious in the sight of God.

What I observed before was something that deformed the Christian, as it was *too much*, something mixed, that is not belonging to the Christian as such; what I speak of now is something that deforms the Christian the other way, viz. by there *not* being *enough*, something wanting, that does belong to the Christian as such: the one deforms the Christian as a monstrous excrescence, the other as thereby the new creature is maimed, and some member in a great measure wanting, or so small and withering as to be very much out of due proportion. This is another spiritual calamity that the saints are liable to through the great imperfection of grace in this life; like the chicken in the egg, in the beginning of its formation, in which, though there are indeed the rudiments or lineaments of all the parts, yet some few parts are plain to be seen, when others are hid, so that without a microscope it appears very monstrous.

When this deficiency and disproportion is great, as sometimes it is in real saints, it is not only a great deformity in itself, but has many ill consequences; it gives the devil great advantage, and leaves a door open for corruption, and exposes to very deformed and unlovely actions, and issues oftentimes in the great wounding of the soul.

For the better understanding of this matter, we may observe that God, in the revelation that he has made of himself to the world by Jesus Christ, has taken care to give a proportionable manifestation of two kinds of excellences or perfections of his nature, viz. those that especially tend to possess us with awe and reverence, and to search and humble us, and those that tend to win, and draw, and encourage us: by *the one*, he appears as an infinitely great, pure, holy, and heart-searching Judge; by *the other*, as a gentle and gracious Father and a loving friend: by the one he is a

pure, searching, and burning flame ; by the other a sweet, refreshing light. These two kinds of attributes are, as it were, admirably tempered together in the revelation of the gospel : there is a proportionable manifestation of justice and mercy, holiness and grace, majesty and gentleness, authority and condescension. God hath thus ordered that his diverse excellences, as he reveals himself in the face of Jesus Christ, should have a proportionable manifestation, herein providing for our necessities : he knew it to be of great consequence that our apprehensions of these diverse perfections of his nature should be duly proportioned one to another ; a defect on the one hand, viz. having much of a discovery of his love and grace, without a proportionable discovery of his awful majesty, and his holy and searching purity, would tend to spiritual pride, carnal confidence, and presumption ; and a defect on the other hand, viz. having much of a discovery of his holy majesty, without a proportionable discovery of his grace, tends to unbelief, a sinful fearfulness, and spirit of bondage : and therefore herein chiefly consists that deficiency of experiences that I am now speaking of. The revelation God has made of himself in his word, and the provision made for our spiritual welfare in the gospel is perfect, but yet the actual light and communications we have, are not perfect, but many ways exceeding imperfect and maimed. And experience plainly shows that Christians may have high experiences in some respects, and yet their circumstances may be unhappy in this regard, that their experiences and discoveries are no more general. There is a great difference among Christians in this respect ; some have much more general discoveries than others, who are upon many accounts the most amiable Christians. Christians may have experiences that are very high, and yet there may be very much of this deficiency and disproportion : their high experiences are truly from the Spirit of God, but sin comes in by the defect ; (as indeed all sin is originally from a defective, privative cause ;) and in such a case high dis-

coveries, at the same time that they are enjoyed, may be, and sometimes are, the occasion, or *causa sine qua non* of sin; sin may come in at that back door, the gap that is left open; as spiritual pride often does: and many times the Spirit of God is quenched by this means, and God punishes the pride and presumption that rises, by bringing such darkness, and suffering such awful consequences and horrid temptations, as are enough to make one's hair stand on end to hear them. Christians therefore should diligently observe their own hearts as to this matter, and should pray to God that he would give them experiences in which one thing may bear a proportion to another, that God may be honored, and their souls edified thereby; and ministers should have an eye to this, in their private dealings with the souls of their people.

It is chiefly from such a defect of experiences that some things have arisen that have been pretty common among true Christians of late, that have been supposed by many to have risen from a good cause; as particularly talking of divine and heavenly things, and expressing divine joys with laughter, or a light behavior. I believe in many instances such things have arisen from a good cause, as their *causa sine qua non*, that high discoveries and gracious joyful affections have been the occasion of them; but the proper cause has been sin, even that odious defect in their experience, whereby there has been wanting a sense of the awful and holy majesty of God as present with them, and their nothingness and vileness before him, proportionable to the sense they have had of God's grace and the love of Christ. And the same is true in many cases of persons' unsuitable boldness, their disposition to speak with authority, intemperate zeal, and many other things that sometimes appear in true Christians, under great religious affections.

And sometimes the vehemence of the motion of the animal spirits, under great affections, is owing in considerable measure, to experiences being thus partial. I have known it in

several instances, that persons have been greatly affected with the dying love of Christ, and the consideration of the happiness of the enjoyment of him in heaven, and other things of that nature, and their animal spirits at the same time have have been in a great emotion, but in the midst of it have had given them a deep sense of the awful, holy majesty of God, and it has at once composed them, and quieted animal nature, without diminishing their comfort, but only has made it of a better and more solid nature; when they have had a sense both of the majesty and grace of God, one thing has, as it were, balanced another, and caused a more happy sedateness and composure of body and mind.

From these things we may learn how to judge of experiences, and to estimate their goodness. Those are not always the best experiences, that are attended with the most violent affections, and most vehement motions of the animal spirits, or that have the greatest effects on the body; nor are they always the best, that do most dispose persons to abound in talk to others, and to speak in the most vehement manner; (though these things often arise from the greatness of spiritual experiences:) but those that are the most excellent experiences that are qualified as follows: 1. That have the least mixture, or are the most purely spiritual. 2. That are the least deficient and partial, in which the diverse things that appertain to Christian experience are proportionable one to another. And 3. That are raised to the highest degree. It is no matter how high they are raised, if they are qualified as before mentioned, the higher the better. Experiences thus qualified, will be attended with the most amiable behavior, and will bring forth the most solid and sweet fruits, and will be the most durable, and will have the greatest effect on the abiding temper of the soul.

If God is pleased to carry on this work, and it should prove to be the dawning of a general revival of the Christian church, it may be expected that the time will come, before long, when the experiences of Christians shall be much more ge-

nerally thus qualified. We must expect green fruits before we have ripe ones. It is probable that hereafter the discoveries which the saints shall have of divine things, will be in a much higher degree than yet have been; but yet shall be so ordered of an infinitely wise and all-sufficient God, that they shall not have so great an effect, in proportion, on the body, and will be less oppressive to nature; and that the outward manifestations will rather be like those that were in Stephen, when he was full of the Holy Ghost, when *all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel.* Their inward fullness of the Spirit of God, in his divine, amiable, and sweet influences, shall, as it were, shine forth in a heavenly aspect, and manner of speech and behavior. But,

III. There is another thing concerning experiences of Christians, of which it is of yet greater importance that we should be aware, than either of the preceding, and that is the *degenerating of experiences.* What I mean, is something diverse from the mere decay of experiences, or their gradually vanishing, by persons' losing their sense of things: it is persons' experiences growing by degrees worse and worse in their kind, more and more partial and deficient, in which, things are more out of due proportion; and also have more and more of a corrupt mixture, the spiritual part decreases, and the other useless and hurtful parts greatly increase. There is such a thing, and it is very frequent, as experience abundantly evidences: I have seen it in very many instances; and great are the mischiefs that have risen through want of being more aware of it.

There is commonly, as I observed before, in high experiences, besides that which is spiritual, a mixture of three things, viz. natural or common affections and workings of the imagination, and a degree of self-righteousness or spiritual pride. Now it often comes to pass, that through persons' not distinguishing the wheat from the chaff, and for want of watchfulness and humble jealousy of themselves, and laying

great weight on the natural and imaginary part, and yielding to it, and indulging of it, that part grows and increases, and the spiritual part decreases; the devil sets in, and works in the corrupt part, and cherishes it to his utmost; till at length the experiences of some persons, who began well, come to but little else, but violent motions of carnal affections, with great heats of the imagination, and a great degree of enthusiasm, and swelling of spiritual pride; very much like some fruits which bud, blossom, and kernel well, but afterwards are blasted with an excess of moisture; so that though the bulk is monstrously great, yet there is little else in it but what is useless and unwholesome. It appears to me very probable, that many of the heresies that have arisen, and sects that have appeared in the Christian world, in one age and another, with wild enthusiastical notions and practices, began at first by this means, that it was such a degenerating of experiences that first gave rise to them, or at least led the way to them.

There is nothing in the world that does so much expose to this degenerating of experiences, as an unheeded spiritual pride and self-confidence, and persons' being conceited of their own stock, without a humble, daily and continual dependence on God. And this very thing seems to be typified of old, by the corrupting of the manna. Some of the children of Israel, because they had gathered a store of manna, trusted in it, there being as they apprehended, sufficient in the store they had gathered and laid up, without humbly looking to heaven, and stooping to the earth for daily supplies; and the consequence was, that their manna bred worms and stank, Exod. xvi. 20. Pride, above all things, promotes this degeneracy of experiences, because it grieves and quenches the Spirit of the Lamb of God, and so kills the spiritual part; and it cherishes the natural part, it inflames the carnal affections, and heats the imagination.

The unhappy person that is the subject of such a degeneracy of experiences, for the most part, is not sensible of his

own calamity; but because he finds himself still violently moved, and has greater heats of zeal, and more vehement motions of his animal spirits, thinks himself fuller of the Spirit of God than ever. But indeed it is with him, as the apostle says of the Galatians, Gal. iii. 3. "Having begun in the Spirit, they are made perfect by the flesh."

By the mixture there is of common affection with love to God, the love of true Christians is liable to degenerate, and to be more and more built on the foundation of a supposition of being his high and peculiar favorites, and less and less on an apprehension of the excellency of God's nature, as he is in himself. So the joy of Christians, by reason of the mixture there is with spiritual joy, is liable to degenerate, and to come to that at last, as to be but little else but joy in self, joy in a person's own supposed eminency, and distinction from others in the favor of God. So zeal, that at first might be in great part spiritual, yet through the mixture there is, in a long continuance of opposition and controversy, may degenerate more and more into human and proud passion, and may come to bitterness, and even a degree of hatred. And so love to the brethren may by degrees come to little else but fondness, and zeal for a party; yea, through a mixture of a natural love to the opposite sex, may degenerate more and more, till it issues in that which is criminal and gross. And I leave it with those who are better acquainted with ecclesiastical history, to inquire whether such a degeneracy of affections as this might not be the first thing that led the way, and gave occasion to the rise of the abominable notions of some sects that have arisen, concerning the community of women. However that is, yet certainly the mutual embraces and kisses of persons of different sexes, under the notion of Christian love and holy kisses, are utterly to be disallowed and abominated, as having the most direct tendency quickly to turn Christian love unto unclean and brutish lust; which will not be the better, but ten times the worse, for being christened by the name of *Christian love*. I should also think it advisable,

that meetings of young people, of both sexes, in the evening, by themselves, without a minister, or any elder people amongst them, for religious exercises, should be avoided: for though for the present, while their minds are greatly solemnized with lively impressions, and a deep sense of divine things, there may appear no ill consequences; yet we must look to the further end of things, and guard against future dangers and advantages that Satan might gain against us. As a lively, solemn sense of divine things on the minds of young persons may gradually decay, so there will be danger that an ill improvement of these meetings may gradually prevail; if not in any unsuitable behavior while together in the meeting, yet when they break up to go home, they may naturally consort together in couples, for other than religious purposes; and it may at last come to that, that young persons may go to such meetings, chiefly for the sake of such an opportunity for company-keeping.

The *defect* there sometimes is in the experiences of Christians exposes them to degenerate, as well as the mixture that they have. Deficient, maimed experiences do sometimes become more and more so: the mind being wholly intent on those things that are in view, and those that are most wanting being neglected, there is less and less of them, and so the gap for corruption to come in grows wider and wider. And commonly both these causes of the degenerating of experiences operate together.

We had need to be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy, as the apostle was over the Christian Corinthians, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtelty, so our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. God indeed will never suffer his true saints totally and finally to fall away, but yet may punish their pride and self-confidence, by suffering them to be long led into a dreadful wilderness, by the subtle serpent, to the great wounding of their own souls, and the interest of religion.

And before I dismiss this head of the degenerating of experiences, I would mention one thing more that tends to it; and that is persons' aiming in their experience to go beyond the rule of God's word, i. e. aiming at that, *which is indeed*, in some respect, beyond the rule. Thus some persons have endeavored utterly to root out and abolish all natural affection, or any special affection or respect to their near relations, under a notion that no other love ought to be allowed, but spiritual love, and that all other love is to be abolished as carnal, and that it becomes Christians to love none upon the account of any thing else, but the image of God; and that therefore love should go out to one and another only in that proportion in which the image of God is seen in them. They might as well argue that a man ought utterly to disallow of, and endeavor to abolish all love or appetite to their daily food, under a notion that it is a carnal appetite, and that no other should be tolerated but spiritual appetites. Why should the saints strive after that, as a high attainment in holiness, which the apostle, in Rom. i. 31., mentions as one instance wherein the heathen had got to the most horrid pass in wickedness, viz. *a being without natural affection?*

Some have doubted whether they might pray for the conversion and salvation of the souls of their children, any more than for the souls of others; because the salvation of the souls of others would be as much to God's glory, as the salvation of their children; and they have supposed that to pray most for their own, would show a selfish disposition. So they have been afraid to tolerate a compassionate grief and concern for their nearest friends, for fear it would be an argument of want of resignation to God.

And it is true, there is great danger of persons' setting their hearts too much upon their earthly friends; our love to earthly friends ought to be under the government of the love of God, and should be attended with a spirit of submission and resignation to his will, and every thing should be subordinated to his glory: but that is no argument that these affections should be entirely abolished, which the Creator of the world has put

within mankind, for the good of mankind, and because he saw they would be needful for them, as they must be united in society, in the present state, and are of great use, when kept in their proper place; and to endeavor totally to root them out, would be to reproach and oppose the wisdom of the Creator. Nor is the being of these natural inclinations, if well regulated, inconsistent with any part of our duty to God, or any argument of a sinful selfishness, any more than the natural abhorrence that there is in the human nature of pain, and natural inclination to ease that was in the man Christ Jesus himself.

It is the duty of parents to be more concerned, and to pray more for the salvation of their children, than for the children of their neighbors; as much as it is the duty of a minister to be more concerned for the salvation of the souls of his flock, and to pray more for them, than those of other congregations, because they are committed to his care; so our near friends are more committed to our care than others, and our near neighbors, than those that live at a great distance; and the people of our land and nation are more, in some sense, committed to our care, than the people of China, and we ought to pray more for them, and to be more concerned that the kingdom of Christ should flourish among them, than in another country, where it would be as much, and no more for the glory of God. Compassion ought to be especially exercised towards friends. Job vi. 14. Christ did not frown upon a special affection and compassion for near friends, but countenanced and encouraged it from time to time, in those that, in the exercise of such an affection and compassion, applied to him for relief for their friends; as in the instance of the woman of Canaan, Jairus, Mary and Martha, the centurion, the widow of Nain, and many others. The apostle Paul, though a man as much resigned and devoted to God, and under the power of his love, perhaps as any mere man that ever lived, yet had a peculiar concern for his countrymen the Jews, the rather on that account, that they were his *brethren*

and kinsmen according to the flesh; he had a very high degree of compassionate grief for them, insomuch that he tells us he had great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for them, and could wish himself accursed from Christ for them.

There are many things that are proper for the saints in heaven, that are not suitable to the state God has set us in, in this world: and for Christians, in these and other instances, to affect to go beyond the present state of mankind, and what God has appointed as fit for it, is an instance of that which the wise man calls *a being righteous overmuch*, and has a tendency to open a door for Satan, and to cause religious affections to degenerate into something very unbecoming of Christians.

Thus I have, as I proposed, taken notice of some things with regard to the inward experiences of Christians, by which Satan has an advantage. I now proceed in the

II. place, to take notice of something with regard to the external effects of experiences, which also gives Satan an advantage. What I have respect to, is the secret and unaccountable influence that custom has upon persons, with respect to the external effects and manifestations of the inward affections of the mind. By custom, I mean both a person's being accustomed to a thing in himself, in his own common, allowed, and indulged practice, and also the countenance and approbation of others amongst whom he dwells, by their general voice and practice. It is well known, and appears sufficiently by what I have said already in this treatise and elsewhere, that I am far from ascribing all the late uncommon effects and outward manifestations of inward experiences to custom and fashion, as some do; I know it to be otherwise, if it be possible for me to know any thing of this nature by the most critical observation, under all manner of opportunities of observing. But yet, this also is exceeding evident by experience, that custom has a strange influence in these things: I know it by the different manners and de-

grees of external effects and manifestations of great affections and high discoveries, in different towns, according to what persons are gradually led into, and insensibly habituated to, by example and custom; and also in the same place, at different times, according to the conduct that they have: if some person is among them to conduct them, that much countenances and encourages such kind of outward manifestations of great affections, they naturally and insensibly prevail, and grow by degrees unavoidable: but when afterwards they come under another kind of conduct, the manner of external appearances will strangely alter: and yet it seems to be without any proper design or contrivance of those in whom there is this alteration; it is not properly affected by them, but the influence of example and custom is secret and insensible to the persons themselves. These things have a vast influence in the manner of persons' manifesting their joys, whether with smiles and an air of lightness, or whether with more solemnity and reverence; and so they have a great influence as to the disposition persons have under high affections to abound in talk; and also as to the manner of their speaking, the loudness and vehemence of their speech; (though it would be exceeding unjust, and against all the evidence of fact and experience, and the reason of things, to lay all dispositions persons have to be much in speaking to others, and to speak in a very earnest manner, to custom.) It is manifest that example and custom has, some way or other, a secret or unsearchable influence on those actions that are involuntary, by the difference that there is in different places, and in the same places at different times, according to the diverse examples and conduct that they have.

Therefore, though it would be very unreasonable, and prejudicial to the interest of religion, to frown upon all these extraordinary external effects and manifestations of great religious affections (for a measure of them is natural, necessary, and beautiful, and the effect in no wise disproportioned to the spiritual cause, and is of great benefit to promote religion;)

yet I think they greatly err who think that these things should be wholly unlimited, and that all should be encouraged in going in these things to the utmost length that they feel themselves inclined to: the consequence of this will be very bad: there ought to be a gentle restraint held upon these things, and there should be a prudent care taken of persons in such extraordinary circumstances, and they should be moderately advised at proper seasons, not to make more ado than there is need of, but rather to hold a restraint upon their inclinations; otherwise extraordinary outward effects will grow upon them, they will be more and more natural and unavoidable, and the extraordinary outward show will increase, without any increase of the internal cause; persons will find themselves under a kind of necessity of making a great ado, with less and less affection of soul, till at length almost any slight emotion will set them going, and they will be more and more violent and boisterous, and will grow louder and louder, till their actions and behavior become indeed very absurd. These things experience proves.

Thus I have taken notice of the more general causes whence the errors that have attended this great revival of religion have risen, and under each head have observed some particular errors that have flowed from these fountains. I now proceed, as I proposed, in the

Second place, to take notice of some particular errors that have risen from several of these causes; in some perhaps they have been chiefly owing to one, and in others to another, and in others to the influence of several, or all conjunctly.

SECTION IV.

Some particular errors that have arisen from these causes.

And here the first thing I would take notice of, is censuring others that are professing Christians, in good standing in the visible church, as unconverted. I need not repeat what I have elsewhere said to show this to be against the plain, and frequent, and strict prohibitions of the word of God: it is the worst disease that has attended this work, most contrary to the spirit and rules of Christianity, and of worst consequences. There is a most unhappy tincture that the minds of many, both ministers and people, have received that way. The manner of many has been, when they first enter into conversation with any person, that seems to have any show, or make any pretenses to religion, to discern him, or to fix a judgment of him, from his manner of talking of things of religion, whether he be converted, or experimentally acquainted with vital piety or not, and then to treat him accordingly, and freely to express their thoughts of him to others, especially those that they have a good opinion of as true Christians, and accepted as brethren and companions in Christ; or if they do not declare their minds expressly, yet by their manner of speaking of them, at least to their friends, they will show plainly what their thoughts are. So when they have heard any minister pray or preach, their first work has been to observe him on a design of discerning him, whether he be a converted man or no; whether he prays like one that feels the saving power of God's Spirit in his heart, and whether he preaches like one that knows what he says. It has been so much the way in some places, that many new converts do not know but it is their duty to do so; they know no other way. And when

once persons yield to such a notion, and give in to such a humor, they will quickly grow very discerning in their own apprehension, they think they can easily tell a hypocrite: and when once they have passed their censure, every thing seems to confirm it, they see more and more in the person that they have censured, that seems to them to show plainly that he is an unconverted man. And then, if the person censured be a minister, every thing in his public performances seems dead and sapless, and to do them no good at all, but on the contrary, to be of deadening influence, and poisonous to the soul; yea, it seems worse and worse to them; his preaching grows more and more intolerable; which is owing to a secret, strong prejudice, that steals in more and more upon the mind, as experience plainly and certainly shows. When the Spirit of God was wonderfully poured out in this place, more than seven years ago, and near thirty souls in a week, take one with another, for five or six weeks together, were to appearance brought home to Christ, and all the town seemed to be alive and full of God, there was no such notion or humor prevailing here; when ministers preached here, as very many did at that time, young and old, our people did not go about to discern whether they were men of experience or not: they did not know that they must: Mr. Stoddard never brought them up in that way; it did not seem natural to them to go about any thing of that nature, nor did any such thing enter into their hearts; but when any minister preached, the business of every one was to listen and attend to what he said, and apply it to his own heart, and make the utmost improvement of it. And it is remarkable, that never did there appear such a disposition in the people, to relish, approve of, and admire ministers' preaching as at that time: such expressions as these were frequent in the mouths of one and another, on occasion of the preaching of strangers here, viz. *that they rejoiced that there were so many such eminent ministers in the country; and they wondered they never heard the*

fame of them before : they were thankful that other towns had so good means ; and the like. And scarcely ever did any minister preach here, but his preaching did some remarkable service ; as I had good opportunity to know, because at that time I had particular acquaintance with most of the persons in the town, in their soul concerns. That it has been so much otherwise of late in many places in the land, is another instance of the secret and powerful influence of custom and example.

There has been an unhappy disposition in some ministers toward their brethren in the ministry in this respect, which has encouraged and greatly promoted such a spirit among some of their people. A wrong improvement has been made of Christ's scourging the buyers and sellers out of the temple ; it has been expected by some, that Christ was now about thus to purge his house of unconverted ministers, and this has made it more natural to them to think that they should do Christ service, and act as co-workers with him, to put to their hand, and endeavor by all means to cashier those ministers that they thought to be unconverted. Indeed, it appears to me probable that the time is coming, when awful judgments will be executed on unfaithful ministers, and that no sort of men in the world will be so much exposed to divine judgments ; but then we should leave that work to Christ, who is the Searcher of hearts, and to whom vengeance belongs ; and not without warrant take the scourge out of his hand into our own. There has been too much of a disposition in some, as it were, to give ministers over as reprobates, that have been looked upon as wolves in sheep's clothing ; which has tended to promote and encourage a spirit of bitterness towards them, and to make it natural to treat them too much as if they knew God hated them. If God's children knew that others were reprobates, it would not be required of them to love them ; we may hate those that we know God hates ; as it is lawful to hate the devil, and as the saints at the day of judgment will hate the wicked.

Some have been too apt to look for fire from heaven upon particular ministers; and this has naturally excited that disposition to call for it, that Christ rebuked in his disciples at Samaria. For my part, though I believe no sort of men on earth are so exposed to spiritual judgments as wicked ministers, yet I feel no disposition to treat any minister as if I supposed that he was finally rejected of God; for I cannot but hope that there is coming a day of such great grace, a time so appointed for the magnifying the riches and sovereignty of divine mercy, beyond what ever was, that a great number of unconverted ministers will obtain mercy. There was no sort of persons in Christ's time, that were so guilty, and so hardened, and towards whom Christ manifested such great indignation, as the priests and scribes, and there were no such persecutors of Christ and his disciples as they; and yet in that great outpouring of the Spirit that began on the day of pentecost, though it began with the common people, yet in the progress of the work, after a while, "a great company of priests in Jerusalem were obedient to the faith," Acts vi. 7. And Saul, one of the most violent of all the persecuting Pharisees, became afterwards the greatest promoter of the work of God that ever was. I hope we shall yet see in many instances a fulfillment of that in Isa. xxix. 24. "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine."

Nothing has been gained by this practice. The end that some have aimed at in it has not been obtained, nor is ever like to be. Possibly some have openly censured ministers, and encouraged their people's uneasiness under them, in hopes that it would soon come to that, that the uneasiness would be so general, and so great, that unconverted ministers in general would be cast off, and that then things would go on happily: but there is no likelihood of it. The devil indeed has obtained his end; this practice has bred a great deal of unhappiness among ministers and people, has spoiled Christians' enjoyment of sabbaths, and made them their

most uneasy, uncomfortable, and unprofitable days, and has stirred up great contention, and set all in a flame; and in one place and another where there was a glorious work of God's Spirit begun, it has in a great measure knocked all in the head, and their ministers hold their places. Some have aimed at a better end in censuring ministers; they have supposed it to be a likely means to awaken them: whereas, indeed, there is no one thing has had so great a tendency to prevent the awakening of disaffected ministers in general; and no one thing has actually had such influence to lock up the minds of ministers against any good effect of this great work of God in the land, upon their minds, in this respect: I have known instances of some that seemed to be much moved by the first appearance of this work, but since have seemed to be greatly deadened by what has appeared of this nature. And if there be one or two instances of ministers that have been awakened by it, there are ten to one on whom it has had a contrary influence. The worst enemies of this work have been inwardly eased by this practice; they have made a shield of it to defend their consciences, and have been glad that it has been carried to so great a length; at the same time that they have looked upon it, and improved it, as a door opened for them to be more bold in opposing the work in general.

There is no such dreadful danger of natural men's being undone by our forbearing thus to censure them, and carrying it towards them as visible Christians; it will be no bloody, hell-peopling charity, as some seem to suppose, when it is known that we do not treat them as Christians, because we have taken it upon us to pass a judgment on their state, on any trial, or exercise of our skill in examining and discerning them, but only as allowing them to be worthy of a public charity, on their profession and good external behavior; any more than Judas was in danger of being deceived, by Christ's treating him a long time as a disciple, and sending him forth as an apostle (because he did not then take it upon him to

act as the Judge and Searcher of hearts, but only as the Head of the visible church). Indeed, such a charity as this may be abused by some, as every thing is, and will be, that is in its own nature proper, and of never so good tendency. I say nothing against dealing thoroughly with conscience, by the most convincing and searching dispensation of the word of God: I do not desire that that sword should be sheathed, or gently handled by ministers; but let it be used as a two-edged sword, to pierce, even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow; let conscience be dealt with, without any compliments; let ministers handle it in flaming fire, without having any more mercy on it, than the furnace has on those metals that are tried in it. But let us let men's persons alone: let the word of God judge them, but do not let us take it upon us till we have warrant for it.

Some have been ready to censure ministers because they seem, in comparison of some other ministers, to be very cold and lifeless in their ministerial performances. But then it should be considered that for aught we know, God may hereafter raise up ministers of so much more excellent and heavenly qualifications, and so much more spiritual and divine in their performances, that there may appear as great a difference between them, and those that now seem the most lively, as there is now between them, and others that are called dead and sapless; and those that are now called lively ministers may appear to their hearers, when they compare them with others that shall excel them, as wretchedly mean and their performances poor, dead, dry things; and many may be ready to be prejudiced against them, as accounting them good for nothing, and it may be calling them soul-murderers. What a poor figure may we suppose, the most lively of us, and those that are most admired by the people, do make in the eyes of the saints of heaven, any otherwise than as their deadness, deformity and rottenness is hid by the veil of Christ's righteousness.

Another thing that has been supposed to be sufficient warrant for openly censuring ministers as unconverted, is their opposing this work of God that has lately been carried on in the land. And there can be no doubt with me but that opposition against this work may be such, as to render either ministers or people, truly scandalous, and expose them to public ecclesiastical censure; and that ministers hereby may utterly defeat the design of their ministry (as I observed before); and so give their people just cause of uneasiness: I should not think that any person had power to oblige me, constantly to attend the ministry of one, who did from time to time, plainly pray and preach against this work, or speak reproachfully of it frequently in his public performances, after all Christian methods had been used for a remedy, and to no purpose.

But as to determining how far opposing this work is consistent with a state of grace, or how far, and for how long time, some persons of good experience in their own souls, through prejudices they have received from the errors that have been mixed with this work, or through some peculiar disadvantages they are under to behold things in a right view of them, by reason of the persons they converse with, or their own cold and dead frames, is, as experience shows, a very difficult thing; I have seen that which abundantly convinces me that the business is too high for me; I am glad that God has not committed such a difficult affair to me; I can joyfully leave it wholly in his hands, who is infinitely fit for it, without meddling at all with it myself. We may represent it as exceeding dangerous to oppose this work, for this we have good warrant in the word of God; but I know of no necessity we are under to determine whether it be possible for those that are guilty of it to be in a state of grace or no.

God seems so strictly to have forbidden this practice, of our judging our brethren in the visible church, not only because he knew that we were too much of babes, infinitely too weak, fallible and blind, to be well capacitated for it, but also

because he knew that it was not a work suited to our proud hearts; that it would be setting us vastly too high, and making us too much of lords over our fellow-creatures. Judging our brethren and passing a condemnatory sentence upon them, seems to carry in it an act of authority, especially in so great a case, to sentence them with respect to that state of their hearts, on which depends their liableness to eternal damnation; as is evident by such interrogations as those (to hear which from God's mouth, is enough to make us shrink into nothing with shame and confusion, and sense of our own blindness and worthlessness), Rom. xiv. 4. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." And James iv. 12. "There is one Lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?" Our wise and merciful Shepherd has graciously taken care not to lay in our way such a temptation to pride; he has cut up all such poison out of our pasture; and therefore we should not desire to have it restored. Blessed be his name that he has not laid such a temptation in the way of my pride! I know that in order to be fit for this business, I must not only be vastly more knowing, but more humble than I am.

Though I believe some of God's own children have of late been very guilty in this matter, yet by what is said of it in the scripture, it appears to me very likely, that before these things which God has lately begun have an end, God will awfully rebuke that practice; may it in sovereign and infinite mercy be prevented, by the deep and open humiliation of those that have openly practiced it.

As this practice ought to be avoided, so should all such open visible marks of distinction and separation that imply it: as particularly, distinguishing such as we have judged to be in a converted state with the compellations of *brother* or *sister*, any further than there is a visible ecclesiastical distinction. In those places where it is the manner to receive such, and such only to the communion of the visible church,

as recommend themselves by giving a satisfying account of their inward experiences, there Christians may openly distinguish such persons, in their speech and ordinary behavior, with a visible separation, without being inconsistent with themselves: and I do not now pretend to meddle with that controversy, whether such an account of experience be requisite to church-fellowship: but certainly, to admit persons to communion with us as brethren in the visible church, and then visibly to reject them, and to make an open distinction between them and others, by different names or appellations, is to be inconsistent with ourselves; it is to make a visible church within a visible church, and visibly to divide between sheep and goats, setting one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

This bitter root of censoriousness must be totally rooted out, as we would prepare the way of the Lord. It has nourished and upheld many other things contrary to the humility, meekness, and love of the gospel. The minds of many have received an unhappy turn, in some respects, with their religion. There is a certain point or sharpness, a disposition to a kind of warmth, that does not savor of that meek, lamb-like, sweet disposition that becomes Christians. Many have now been so long habituated to it, that they do not know how to get out of it; but we must get out of it; the point and sharpness must be blunted, and we must learn another way of manifesting our zeal for God.

There is a way of reflecting on others, and censuring them in open prayer, that some have; which, though it has a fair show of love, yet is indeed the boldest way of reproaching others imaginable, because there is implied in it an appeal to the Most High God, concerning the truth of their censures and reflections.

And here I would observe by the way, that some have a way of joining a sort of imprecations with their petitions for others, though but conditional ones, that appear to me wholly needless and improper: they pray that others may either be

converted or removed. I never heard nor read of any such thing practiced in the church of God till now, unless it be with respect to some of the most visibly and notoriously abandoned enemies of the church of God. This is a sort of cursing men in our prayers, adding a curse with our blessing; whereas the rule is *bless and curse not.* To pray that God would kill another, is to curse him with the like curse wherewith Elisha cursed the children that came out of Bethel. And the case must be very great and extraordinary indeed to warrant it, unless we were prophets, and did not speak our own words, but words indited by the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God. It is pleaded that if God has no design of converting others, is is best for them, as well as best for others, that they should be immediately taken away and sent to hell before they have contracted more guilt. To which I would say, that so it was best that those children that met Elisha, seeing God had no design of converting them, should die immediately as they did; but yet Elisha's imprecating that sudden death upon them, was cursing them; and therefore would not have been lawful for one that did not speak in the name of the Lord as a prophet.

And then if we give way to such things as these, where shall we stop? A child that suspects he has an unconverted father and mother, may pray openly that his father and mother may either be converted, or taken away and sent to hell now quickly, before their guilt is greater. (For unconverted parents are as likely to poison the souls of their family in their manner of training them up, as unconverted ministers are to poison their people.) And so it come to that, that it might be a common thing all over the country, for children to pray after this manner concerning their parents, and brethren and sisters concerning one another, and husbands concerning their wives, and wives concerning husbands; and so for persons to pray concerning all their unconverted friends and neighbors; and not only so, but we may also pray concerning all those saints that are not lively Christians, that

they may either be enlivened or taken away; if that be true that is often said by some at this day, that these cold, dead saints do more hurt than natural men, and lead more souls to hell, and that it would be well for mankind if they were all dead.

How needless are such petitions or imprecations as these? What benefit is there of them? Why is it not sufficient for us to pray that God would provide for his church, and the good of souls, and take care of his own flock, and give it needful means and advantages for its spiritual prosperity? Does God need to be directed by us in what way he shall do it? What need we ask of God to do it by killing such and such persons, if he does not convert them? unless we delight in the thoughts of God's answering us in such terrible ways, and with such awful manifestations of his wrath to our fellow-creatures.

And why do not ministers direct sinners to pray for themselves, that God would either convert them or kill them, and send them to hell now, before their guilt is greater? In this way we should lead persons in the next place to self-murder: for many probably would soon begin to think that that which they may pray for, they may seek, and use the means of.

Some with whom I have discoursed about this way of praying, have said that the Spirit of God, as it were, forces them to utter themselves thus, as it were forces out such words from their mouths, when otherwise they should not dare to utter them. But such a kind of impulse does not look like the influence of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God sometimes strongly inclines men to utter words; but not by putting expressions into the mouth, and urging to utter them; but by filling the heart with a sense of divine things, and holy affections; and those affections and that sense inclines the mouth to speak. That other way of men's being urged to use certain expressions, by an unaccountable force, is very probably from the influence of the spirit of the devil.

SECTION V.

Of errors connected with lay exhorting.

Another thing I would take notice of, in the management of which there has been much error and misconduct, is lay exhorting; about which there has been abundance of disputing, jangling, and contention.

In the midst of all the disputes that have been, I suppose that all are agreed as to these two things, viz. 1. That all exhorting one another of laymen is not unlawful or improper; but on the contrary, that some exhorting is a Christian duty. And 2. I suppose also, all will allow that there is something that is proper only for ministers; that there is some kind or way of exhorting and teaching or other, that belongs only to *the office of teachers*. All will allow that God has appointed such an office as that of *teachers* in the Christian church, and therefore doubtless will allow that something or other is proper and peculiar to that office, or some business of *teaching* that belongs to it, that does not belong as much to others as to them.

If there be any way of teaching that is peculiar to that office, then for others to take that upon them, is to invade the office of a minister: which doubtless is very sinful, and is often so represented in scripture. But the great difficulty is to settle the bounds, and to tell exactly how far laymen may go, and when they exceed their limits: which is a matter of so much difficulty, that I do not wonder if many in their zeal have transgressed. The two ways of teaching and exhorting, the one of which ought ordinarily to be left to ministers, and the other of which may and ought to be practiced by the people, may be expressed by those two names of *preaching*, and *exhorting* in a way of *Christian conversation*. But then a great deal of difficulty and contro-

versy arises to determine what is *preaching*, and what is *Christian conversation*. However I will humbly offer my thoughts concerning this subject of lay exhorting, as follows.

1. The common people in exhorting one another ought not to clothe themselves with the like authority with that which is proper for ministers. There is a certain authority that ministers have, and should exercise in teaching, as well as governing the flock. Teaching is spoken of in scripture as an act of authority, 1 Tim. ii. 12. In order to a man's preaching, special authority must be committed to him. Rom. x. 15. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" Ministers in this work of teaching and exhorting are clothed with authority, as Christ's messengers, Mal. ii. 7. and as representing him, and so speaking in his name, and in his stead, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20. And it seems to be the most honorable thing that belongs to the office of a minister of the gospel, that to him is committed the word of reconciliation, and that he has power to preach the gospel, as Christ's messenger, and speaking in his name. The apostle seems to speak of it as such, 1 Cor. i. 16, 17. Ministers therefore in the exercise of this power, may clothe themselves with authority in speaking, or may teach others in an authoritative manner. Tit. ii. 15. "These things speak and exhort, and rebuke, with all authority: let no man despise thee." But the common people, in exhorting one another, ought not thus to exhort in an authoritative manner. There is a great deal of difference between teaching as a *father* amongst a company of children, and counseling in a *brotherly* way, as the children may kindly counsel and admonish one another. Those that are mere brethren ought not to assume authority in exhorting, though one may be better, and have more experience than another. Laymen ought not to exhort as though they were the embassadors or messengers of Christ, as ministers do; nor should they exhort, and warn, and charge, *in his name*, according to the ordinary import of such an expression, when applied to teaching; indeed in one

sense, a Christian ought to do every thing he does in religion in the name of Christ, i. e. he ought to act in a dependence on him as his Head and Mediator, and do all for his glory: but the expression as it is usually understood, when applied to teaching or exhorting, is speaking in Christ's stead, and as having a message from him.

Persons may clothe themselves with authority in speaking, either by the authoritative words they make use of, or in the manner, and authoritative air of their speaking: though some may think that this latter is a matter of indifferency, or at least, of small importance, yet, there is indeed a great deal in it: a person may go much out of his place, and be guilty of a great degree of assuming, in the manner of his speaking those words, which as they might be spoken, might be proper for him: the same words spoken in a different manner, may express what is very diverse: doubtless, there may be as much hurt in the manner of a person's speaking, as there may in his looks; but the wise man tells us, that "a high look is an abomination to the Lord," Prov. xxi. 4. Again, a man may clothe himself with authority, in the circumstances under which he speaks: as for instance, if he sets himself up as a *public teacher*. Here I would have it observed, that I do not suppose that a person is guilty of this, merely because he speaks in the hearing of many: persons may speak, and speak only in a way of conversation, and yet speak in the hearing of a great number, as they often do in their common conversation about temporal things, at feasts and entertainments, where women, as well as others, do converse freely together about worldly things, in the hearing of a considerable number; and it may happen to be in the hearing of a great number, and yet without offense: and if their conversation on such occasions should turn on spiritual things, and they should speak as freely and openly, I do not see why it would not be as harmless. Nor do I think, that if besides a great number being present, persons speak with a very earnest and loud voice, this is for them to set up themselves as

public teachers, if they do it from no contrivance or premeditated design, or as purposely directing themselves to a congregation or multitude, and not speaking to any that are composed to the solemnity of any public service; but speaking in the time of conversation, or a time when all do freely converse one with another, they express what they then feel, directing themselves to none but those that are near them, and fall in their way, speaking in that earnest and pathetical manner, to which the subject they are speaking of, and the affecting sense of their souls naturally leads them, and as it were constrains them: I say, that for persons to do thus, though many happen to hear them, yet it does not appear to me to be setting themselves up as public teachers: yea, if this be added to these other circumstances, that all this happens to be in a meeting-house; I do not think that merely its being in such a place, much alters the case, provided the solemnity of public service and divine ordinances be over, and the solemn assembly broke up, and some stay in the house for mutual religious conversation; provided also that they speak in no authoritative way, but in a humble manner, becoming their degree and station, though they speak very earnestly and pathetically.

Indeed modesty might in ordinary cases restrain some persons, as women, and those that are young, from so much as speaking, when a great number are present; at least, when some of those present are much their superiors, unless they are spoken to: and yet the case may be so extraordinary, as fully to warrant it. If something very extraordinary happens to persons, or if they are in extraordinary circumstances; as if a person be struck with lightning, in the midst of a great company, or if he lies a dying, it appears to none any violation of modesty for him to speak freely, before those that are much his superiors. I have seen some women and children in such circumstances, on religious accounts, that it has appeared to me no more a transgressing the laws of humility

and modesty, for them to speak freely, let who will be present, than if they were dying.

But then may a man be said to set up himself as a public teacher, when he in a set speech, of design, directs himself to a multitude, either in the meeting-house, or elsewhere, as looking that they should compose themselves to attend to what he has to say; and much more when this is a contrived and premeditated thing, without any thing like a constraint, by any extraordinary sense or affection that he is then under; and more still, when meetings are appointed on purpose to hear lay persons exhort, and they take it as their business to be speakers, while they expect that others should come, and compose themselves, and attend as hearers; when private Christians take it upon them in private meetings, to act as the masters or presidents of the assembly, and accordingly from time to time to teach and exhort the rest, this has the appearance of authoritative teaching.

When private Christians, that are no more than mere brethren, exhort and admonish one another, it ought to be in a humble manner, rather by way of entreaty, than with authority: and the more, according as the station of persons is lower. Thus it becomes women, and those that are young, ordinarily to be at a greater distance from any appearance of authority in speaking than others: thus much at least is evident by that in 1 Tim. ii. 9, 11, 12.

That lay persons ought not to exhort one another as clothed with authority, is a general rule, but it cannot justly be supposed to extend to heads of families in their own families. Every Christian family is a little church, and the heads of it are its authoritative teachers and governors. Nor can it extend to schoolmasters among their scholars; and some other cases might perhaps be mentioned, that ordinary discretion will distinguish, where a man's circumstances do properly clothe him with authority, and render it fit and suitable for him to counsel and admonish others in an authoritative manner.

II. No man but only a minister that is duly appointed to that sacred calling, ought to follow teaching and exhorting *as a calling*, or so as to neglect that which is his *proper calling*. A having the office of a teacher in the church of God implies two things : 1, a being invested with the *authority* of a teacher ; and 2, a being called to the *business* of a teacher, to make it the business of his life. Therefore that man that is not a minister, that takes either of these upon him, invades the office of a minister. Concerning assuming the authority of a minister, I have spoken already. But if a layman does not assume authority in his teaching, yet if he forsakes his proper calling, or doth so at least in a great measure, and spends his time in going about from house to house, to counsel and exhort, he goes beyond his line, and violates Christian rules. Those that have the office of teachers or exhorters, have it for their calling, and should make it their business, as a business proper to their office ; and none should make it their business but such. Rom. xii. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think ; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the proportion of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office ; so we being many, are one body in Christ. He that teacheth, let him wait on teaching ; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." 1 Cor. xii. 29. "Are all apostles ? Are all prophets ? Are all teachers ?" 1 Cor. vii. 20. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." 1 Thes. iv. 11. "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you."

It will be a very dangerous thing for laymen, in either of these respects, to invade the office of a minister ; if this be common among us, we shall be in danger of having a stop put to the work of God, and the ark's turning aside from us, before it comes to Mount Zion, and of God's making a

breach upon us; as of old there was an unhappy stop put to the joy of the congregation of Israel, in bringing up the ark of God, because others carried it besides the Levites: and therefore David, when the error was found out, says, 1 Chron. xv. 2., "None ought to carry the ark of God, but the Levites only; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever." And because one presumed to touch the ark that was not of the sons of Aaron, therefore the Lord made a breach upon them, and covered their day of rejoicing with a cloud in his anger.

Before I dismiss this head of lay exhorting, I would take notice of three things relating to it, upon which there ought to be a restraint.

1. Speaking in the time of the solemn worship of God, as public prayer, singing, or preaching, or administration of the sacrament of the holy supper; or any duty of social worship: this should not be allowed. I know it will be said, that in some cases, when persons are exceedingly affected, they cannot help it; and I believe so too: but then I also believe, and know by experience, that there are several things that contribute to that inability, besides merely and absolutely the sense of divine things they have upon their hearts. Custom and example, or the thing's being allowed, have such an influence, that they actually help to make it impossible for persons under strong affections to avoid speaking. If it was disallowed, and persons at the time that they were thus disposed to break out, had this apprehension, that it would be a very unbecoming, shocking thing for them so to do, it would be a help to them as to their ability to avoid it: their inability arises from their strong and vehement disposition; and so far as that disposition is from a good principle, it would be weakened by the coming in of this thought to their minds, viz. "What I am going to do, will be for the dishonor of Christ and religion:" and so that inward vehemence, that pushed them forward to speak, would

fall, and they would be enabled to avoid it. This experience confirms.

2. There ought to be a moderate restraint on the loudness of persons talking under high affections; for if there be not, it will grow natural and unavoidable for persons to be louder and louder, without any increase of their inward sense: till it becomes natural to them, at last, to scream and halloo to almost every one they see in the streets, when they are much affected: but this is certainly a thing very improper, and what has no tendency to promote religion. The man Christ Jesus, when he was upon earth, had, doubtless, as great a sense of the infinite greatness and importance of eternal things, and the worth of souls, as any have now-a-days; but there is not the least appearance in his history, of his taking any such course, or manner of exhorting others.

3. There should also be some restraint on the abundance of persons' talk, under strong affections; for if persons give themselves an unbounded liberty, to talk just so much as they feel an inclination to, they will increase and abound more and more in talk, beyond the proportion of their sense or affection; till at length it will become ineffectual on those that hear them, and by the commonness of their abundant talk, they will defeat their own end.

SECTION VI.

Of errors connected with singing praises to God.

One thing more I would take notice of before I conclude this part, is the mismanagement that has been in some places of the duty of singing praises to God. I believe it to have been one fruit of the extraordinary degrees of the sweet and joyful influences of the Spirit of God that have been lately given, that there has appeared such a disposition to abound

in that duty, and frequently to fall into this divine exercise; not only in appointed solemn meetings, but when Christians occasionally meet together at each other's houses. But the mismanagement I have respect to, is the getting into a way of performing it, without almost any appearance of that reverence and solemnity with which all visible, open acts of divine worship ought to be attended; it may be two or three in a room singing hymns of praise to God, others that are present talking at the same time, others about their work, with little more appearance of regard to what is doing, than if some were only singing a common song, for their amusement and diversion. There is danger, if such things are continued, of its coming to that by degrees, that a mere nothing be made of this duty, to the great violation of the third commandment. Let Christians abound as much as they will in this holy, heavenly exercise, in God's house, and in their own houses; but when it is performed, let it be performed as a holy act, wherein they have immediately and visibly to do with God. When any social, open act of devotion, or solemn worship of God ie performed, God should be reverenced as visibly present, by those that are present. As we would not have the ark of God depart from us, nor provoke God to make a breach upon us, we should take heed that we handle the ark with reverence.

With respect to companies singing in the streets, going to, or coming from, the place of public worship, I would humbly offer my thoughts in the following particulars.

1. The rule of Christ concerning *putting new wine into old bottles*, does undoubtedly take place in things of this nature, supposing it to be a thing that in itself is good, but not essential, and not particularly enjoined or forbidden. For things, so very new and uncommon, and of so open and public a nature, to be suddenly introduced and set up and practiced, in many parts of the country, without the matter being so much as first proposed to any public consideration, or giving any opportunity for the people of God to weigh the

matter, or to consider any reasons that might be offered to support it, is putting new wine into old bottles with a witness; —as if it were with no other design than to burst them directly. Nothing else can be expected to be the consequence of this, than uproar and confusion, and great offense, and unhappy mischievous disputes, even among the children of God themselves: not that that which is good in itself, and is new, ought to be forborne, till there is nobody that will dislike it; but it ought to be forborne till the visible church of God is so prepared for it, at least, that there is a probability that it will not do more hurt than good, or hinder the work of God more than promote it; as is most evident from Christ's rule, and the apostles' practice. If it be brought in, when the country is so unprepared, that the shock and surprise on persons' minds, and the contention and prejudice against religion, that it is like to be an occasion of, will do more to hinder religion, than the practice of it is like to do to promote it, then the fruit is picked before it is ripe. And indeed, such a hasty endeavor to introduce such an innovation, supposing it to be good in itself, is the likeliest way to retard the effectual introduction of it; it will hinder its being extensively introduced, much more than it will promote it, and so will defeat its own end. But,

2. As to the thing itself, if a considerable part of a congregation have occasion to go in company together to a place of public worship, and they should join together in singing praises to God, as they go, I confess, that after long consideration, and endeavoring to view the thing every way, with the utmost diligence and impartiality I am capable of, I cannot find any valid objection against it. As to the common objection from Matt. vi. 5. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men;" it is strong against a single person's singing in the streets, or in the meeting-house, by himself, as offering to God personal worship; but as it is brought against

a considerable company, their thus publicly worshiping God, it appears to me to have no weight at all; to be sure it is of no more force against a company's thus praising God in the streets, than against their praising him in the synagogue or meeting-house, for the streets and the synagogues are both put together in these words of our Savior, as parallel in the case that he had respect to. It is evident that Christ speaks of personal, and not public worship. If to sing in the streets be ostentatious, then it must be because it is a public place, and it cannot be done there without being very open; but it is no more public than the synagogue or meeting-house is when full of people. Some worship is in its nature private, as that which is proper to particular persons, or families, or private societies, and has respect to their particular concerns: but that which I now speak of is performed under no other notion than a part of God's public worship, without any relation to any private, separate society, or any chosen or picked number, and in which every visible Christian has equal liberty to join, if it be convenient for him, and he has a disposition, as in the worship that is performed in the meeting-house. When persons are going to the house of public worship, to serve God there with the assembly of his people, they are upon no other design than that of putting public honor upon God; that is the business they go from home upon, and even in their walking the streets on this errand, they appear in a public act of respect to God; and therefore if they go in company with public praise, it is not a being public when they ought to be private. It is one part of the beauty of public worship, that it be *very public;* the more public it is, the more open honor it puts upon God; and especially is it beautiful in that part of public worship, viz. *public praise:* for the very notion of public praising of God, is to declare abroad his glory, to publish his praise, to make it known, and proclaim it aloud, as is evident by innumerable expressions of scripture. It is fit that God's honor should not be concealed, but made known in the great congregation, and proclaimed before the sun, and

upon the house-tops, before kings, and all nations, and that his praises should be heard to the utmost ends of the earth.

I suppose none will condemn singing God's praises, merely because it is performed in the open air, and not in a close place: and if it may be performed by a company in the open air, doubtless they may do it moving, as well as standing still. So the children of Israel praised God, when they went to Mount Zion, with the ark of God; and so the multitude praised Christ, when they entered with him into Jerusalem, a little before his passion; and so the children of Israel were wont, from year to year, to go up to Jerusalem, when they went in companies, from all parts of the land, three times in a year, when they often used to manifest the engagedness of their minds, by traveling all night, and manifested their joy and gladness, by singing praises, with great decency and beauty, as they went towards God's holy mountain; as is evident by Isa. xxx. 29. "Ye shall have a song, as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept, and gladness of heart; as when one goeth with a pipe, to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel." And Psalm xlii. 4. "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day." Psalm. c. 4. "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." When God's people are going to his house, the occasion is so joyful to a Christian in a lively frame, (the language of whose heart is, *Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord*, and who is glad when it is so said to him,) that the duty of singing praises seems to be peculiarly beautiful on such an occasion. So that if the state of the country was ripe for it, and it should be so that there should be frequent occasions for a considerable part of a congregation to go together to the places of public worship, and there was in other respects a proportionable appearance of fervency of devotion, it appears to me that it would be ra-

vishingly beautiful, if such things were practiced all over the land, and would have a great tendency to enliven, animate, and rejoice the souls of God's saints, and greatly to propagate vital religion. I believe the time is coming when the world will be full of such things.

3. It seems to me to be requisite that there should be the consent of the governing part of the worshiping societies, to which persons have joined themselves, and of which they own themselves a part, in order to the introducing of things in public worship, so new and uncommon, and not essential, nor particularly commanded, into the places where those worshiping societies belong: the peace and union of such societies seems to require it; seeing they have voluntarily united themselves to these worshiping societies, to that end, that they might be one in the affairs of God's public worship, and obliged themselves in covenant to act as brethren and mutual assistants, and members of one body, in those affairs, and all are hereby naturally and necessarily led to be concerned with one another, in matters of religion and God's worship; and seeing that this is a part of the public worship, and worship that must be performed from time to time in the view of the whole, being performed at a time when they are meeting together for mutual assistance in worship, and therefore that which all must unavoidably be in some measure concerned in, so at least as to show their approbation and consent, or open dislike and separation from them in it; I say, it being thus, charity, and a regard to the union and peace of such societies, seems to require a consent of the governing part, in order to the introducing any thing of this nature (unless they think those societies unworthy that they should be joined to them any longer, and so first renounce them, as the worshiping societies of which they are members). Certainly, if we are of the spirit of the apostle Paul, and have his discretion, we shall not set up any such practice without it: he, for the sake of peace, conformed, in things wherein he was not particularly forbidden,

to the Jews, when among them; and so when among those that were without the law, conformed to them, wherein he might. To be sure those go much beyond proper limits, who, coming from abroad, do immediately of their own heads, in a strange place, set up such a new and uncommon practice among a people.

In introducing any thing of this nature among a people, their minister especially ought to be consulted, and his voice taken, as long as he is owned for their minister. Ministers are pastors of worshiping societies, and their heads and guides in the affairs of public worship. They are called in scripture, *those that rule over them*, and their people are commanded *to obey them, because they watch for their souls, as those that must give account.* If it belongs to these shepherds and rulers to direct and guide the flock in any thing at all, it belongs to them so to do, in the circumstantials of their public worship.

Thus I have taken particular notice of many of those things that have appeared to me to be amiss, in the management of our religious concerns, relating to the present revival of religion, and have taken liberty freely to express my thoughts upon them. Upon the whole, it appears manifest to me, that things have, as yet, never been set agoing in their right channel; if they had, and means had been blessed in proportion as they have been now, this work would have so prevailed, as before this time to have carried all afore it, and have triumphed over New England as its conquest.

The devil, in driving things to these extremes, besides the present hindrance of the work of God, has, I believe, had in view a twofold mischief hereafter, in the issue of things; one with respect to those that are more cold in religion; to carry things to such an extreme, that people in general, at length having their eyes opened, by the great excess, and seeing that things must needs be wrong, he might take the advantage to tempt them entirely to reject the whole work, as being all nothing but delusion and distraction. And

another is with respect to those that have been very warm and zealous, of God's own children that have been out of the way, to sink them down in unbelief and darkness. The time is coming, I doubt not, when the bigger part of them will be convinced of their errors; and then probably the devil will take advantage to lead them into a dreadful wilderness, and to puzzle and confound them about their own experiences, and the experiences of others; and to make them to doubt of many things that they ought not to doubt of, and even to tempt them with atheistical thoughts. I believe if all true Christians all over the land, should now at once have their eyes opened, fully to see all their errors, it would seem for the present to damp religion: the dark thoughts, that it would at first be an occasion of, and the inward doubts, difficulties, and conflicts that would rise in their souls, would deaden their lively affections and joys, and would cause an appearance of a present decay of religion. But yet it would do God's saints great good in their latter end; it would fit them for more spiritual and excellent experiences, more humble and heavenly love, and unmixed joys, and would greatly tend to a more powerful, extensive, and durable prevalence of vital piety.

I do not know but we shall be in danger, by and by, after our eyes are fully opened to see our errors, to go to contrary extremes. The devil has driven the *pendulum* far beyond its proper point of rest; and when he has carried it to the utmost length that he can, and it begins by its own weight to swing back, he probably will set in, and drive it with the utmost fury the other way, and so give us no rest, and if possible prevent our settling in a proper medium. What a poor, blind, weak, and miserable creature is man, at his best estate! We are like poor, helpless sheep; the devil is too subtle for us. What is our strength! What is our wisdom! How ready are we to go astray! How easily are we drawn aside, into innumerable snares, while we in the mean time

are bold and confident, and doubt not but that we are right and safe ! We are foolish sheep, in the midst of subtle serpents, and cruel wolves, and do not know it. O how unfit are we to be left to ourselves ! And how much do we stand in need of the wisdom, the power, the condescension, patience, forgiveness, and gentleness of our good Shepherd !

THOUGHTS ON THE REVIVAL, &c.

PART V.

SHOWING POSITIVELY, WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE TO PROMOTE THIS WORK.

In considering of means and methods for promoting this glorious work of God, I have already observed, in some instances, wherein there has been needless objecting and complaining, and have also taken notice of many things amiss, that ought to be amended: I now proceed in the

Third and last place, to show positively, what ought to be done, or what courses (according to my humble opinion) ought to be taken to promote this work. The obligations that all are under, with one consent, to do their utmost, and the great danger of neglecting it, were observed before. I hope that some, upon reading what was said under that head, will be ready to say, What shall we do? To such readers I would now offer my thoughts, in answer to such an inquiry.

SECTION. I.

Of removing the hindrances to this work.

And that which I think we ought to set ourselves about in the first place, is to remove stumbling-blocks. When God is revealed, as about to come, gloriously to set up his kingdom

in the world, this is proclaimed, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God," Isa. xl. 3. And again, Isa. lvii. 14., "Cast ye up, cast ye up; prepare the way; take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people." And chap. lxii. 10., "Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones."

And in order to this, there must be a great deal done at confessing of faults, on both sides: for undoubtedly many and great are the faults that have been committed, in the jangling and confusions, and mixtures of light and darkness, that have been of late. There is hardly any duty more contrary to our corrupt dispositions, and mortifying to the pride of man; but it must be done. Repentance of faults is, in a peculiar manner, a proper duty, when the kingdom of heaven is at hand, or when we especially expect or desire that it should come; as appears by John the Baptist's preaching. And if God does now loudly call upon us to repent, then he also calls upon us to make proper manifestations of our repentance. I am persuaded that those that have openly opposed this work, or have from time to time spoken lightly of it, cannot be excused in the sight of God, without openly confessing their fault therein; especially if they be ministers. If they have any way, either directly or indirectly, opposed the work, or have so behaved in their public performances or private conversation, as has prejudiced the minds of their people against the work, if hereafter they shall be convinced of the goodness and divinity of what they have opposed, they ought by no means to palliate the matter, and excuse themselves, and pretend that they always thought so, and that it was only such and such imprudences that they objected against, but they ought openly to declare their conviction, and condemn themselves for what they have done; for it is Christ that they have spoken against, in speaking lightly of, and prejudicing others against this work; yea, worse than that, it is the Holy Ghost. And though they have done it

ignorantly, and in unbelief, yet when they find out who it is that they have opposed, undoubtedly God will hold them bound publicly to confess it.

And on the other side, if those that have been zealous to promote the work, have in any of the forementioned instances openly gone much out of the way, and done that which is contrary to Christian rules, whereby they have openly injured others, or greatly violated good order, and so done that which has wounded religion, they must publicly confess it, and humble themselves, as they would gather out the stones, and prepare the way of God's people. They who have laid great stumbling-blocks in other's way, by their *open transgression*, are bound to remove them, by their *open repentance.*

Some probably will be ready to object against this, that the opposers will take advantage by this to behave themselves insolently, and to insult both them and religion. And indeed, to the shame of some, they have taken advantage by such things; as of the good spirit that Mr. Whitefield showed in his retractions, and some others. But if there are some imbittered enemies of religion, that stand ready to improve every thing to its disadvantage, yet that ought not to hinder doing an enjoined Christian duty; though it be in the manifestation of humility and repentance, after a fault openly committed. To stand it out, in a visible impenitence of a real fault, to avoid such an inconvenience, is to do evil to prevent evil. And besides, the danger of an evil consequence is much greater on the other side: to commit sin, and then stand in it, is what will give the enemy the greatest advantage. For Christians to act like Christians, in openly humbling themselves, when they have openly offended, in the end brings the greatest honor to Christ and religion; and in this way are persons most likely to have God appear for them.

Again, at such a day as this, God does especially call his people to the exercise of extraordinary meekness and mutual

forbearance: for at such a time, Christ appears as it were coming in his kingdom, which calls for great moderation in our behavior towards all men; as is evident Phil. iv. 5., "Let your moderation be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand." The awe of the divine majesty that appears present or approaching, should dispose us to it, and deter us from the contrary. For us to be judging one another, and behaving with fierceness and bitterness, one towards another, when he who is the Searcher of all hearts, to whom we must all give an account, appears so remarkably present, is exceeding unsuitable. Our business at such a time should be at home, searching ourselves, and condemning ourselves, and taking heed to our own behavior. If there be glorious prosperity to the church of God approaching, those that are the most meek, will have the largest share in it: for when Christ "rides forth, in his glory and majesty, it is because of truth, meekness, and righteousness." Psalm xlv. 3, 4. And when God remarkably "arises, to execute judgment, it is to save all the meek of the earth." Psalm lxxvi. 9. And it is "the meek that shall increase their joy in the Lord." Isa. xxix. 19. And when the time comes that God will give this lower world into the hands of his saints, it is "the meek that shall inherit the earth." Psalm xxxvii. 11. and Mat. v. 9. "But with the froward, God will show himself unsavory."

Those, therefore, that have been zealous for this work, and have greatly erred and been injurious in their zeal, ought not to be treated with bitterness. There is abundant reason to think, that most of them are the dear children of God, for whom Christ died; and therefore that they will see their error. As to those things, wherein we see them to be in an error, we have reason to say of them as the apostle, Philip. iii. 15., "If any are otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto them." Their errors should not be made use of by us, so much to excite indignation towards them, but should influence all of us, that hope that we are the children of God, to humble ourselves, and become more entirely dependent on

the Lord Jesus Christ, when we see those, that are God's own people, so ready to go astray. And those ministers that have been judged, and injuriously dealt with, will do the part of Christ's disciples, not to judge and revile again, but to receive such injuries with meekness and forbearance, and making a good improvement of them, more strictly examining their hearts and ways, and committing themselves to God. This will be the way to have God vindicate them in his providence, if they belong to him. We have not yet seen the end of things; nor do we know who will be most vindicated, and honored of God, in the issue. Eccl. vii. 8. "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."

Contrary to this mutual meekness, is each party's stigmatizing one another with odious names, as is done in many parts of New England, which tends greatly to widen and perpetuate the breach. Such distinguishing names of reproach, do, as it were, divide us into two armies, separated, and drawn up in battle array, ready to fight one with another, which greatly hinders the work of God.

And as such an extraordinary time as this does especially require of us the exercise of a great deal of forbearance, *one towards another;* so there is peculiarly requisite in God's people, the exercise of great patience, in *waiting on God*, under any special difficulties and disadvantages they may be under, as to the means of grace. The beginning of a revival of religion will naturally and necessarily be attended with a great many difficulties of this nature; many parts of the reviving church will, for a while, be under great disadvantages, by reason of what remains of the old disease, of a general corruption of the visible church. We cannot expect that, after a long time of degeneracy and depravity in the state of things in the church, things should all come to rights at once; it must be a work of time: and for God's people to be over hasty and violent, in such a case, being resolved to have every thing rectified at once, or else forcibly to de-

liver themselves, by breaches and separations, is the way to hinder things coming to rights as they otherwise would, and to keep them back, and the way to break all in pieces. Not but that the case may be such, the difficulty may be so intolerable, as to allow of no delay, and God's people cannot continue in the state wherein they were, without violations of absolute commands of God. But otherwise, though the difficulty may be very great, another course should be taken. God's people should have their recourse directly to the throne of grace, to represent their difficulties before the great Shepherd of the sheep, that has the care of all the affairs of his church ; and when they have done, they should wait patiently upon him : if they do so, they may expect that in his time, he will appear for their deliverance : but if instead of that, they are impatient, and take the work into their own hands, they will betray their want of faith, and will dishonor God, and cannot have such reason to hope that Christ will appear for them, as they have desired, but have reason to fear that he will leave them to manage their affairs for themselves, as well as they can : when otherwise, if they had waited on Christ patiently, continuing still instant in prayer, they might have had an appearing for them, much more effectually to deliver them. "He that believeth shall not make haste ;" and it is for those that are found patiently waiting on the Lord, under difficulties, that he will especially appear, when he comes to do great things for his church, as is evident by Isa. xxx. 18. and chap. xl. at the latter end, and xlix. 23., and Ps. xxxvii. 9., and many other places.

I have somewhere, not long since, met with an exposition of those words of the spouse, that we have several times repeated in the book of Canticles, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please," which is the only satisfying exposition that ever I met with ; which was to this purpose, viz. that when the church of God is under great difficulties, and in distress, and Christ does not appear for her help, but seems to neglect

her, as though he were asleep, God's people, or the daughters of Jerusalem, in such a case, should not show a hasty spirit; and not having patience to wait for Christ to awake for their help, till his time comes, take indirect courses for their own deliverance, and use violent means for their escape, before Christ appears to open the door for them; and so, as it were, *stir up, and awake Christ*, before his time. When the church is in distress, and God seems not to appear for her in his providence, he is very often represented in scripture, as being asleep; as Christ was asleep in the ship, when the disciples were tossed by the storm, and the ship covered with waves: and God's appearing afterwards for his people's help, is represented as his awaking out of sleep. Psalm vii. 6. and xxxv. 23. and xliv. 23. and lix. 4. and lxxiii. 20. Christ has an appointed time for his thus awaking out of sleep: and his people ought to wait upon him; and not, in an impatient fit, stir him up before his time. It is worthy to be observed how strict this charge is given to the daughters of Jerusalem, which is repeated three times over in the book of Canticles, chap. ii. 7. and iii. 5. and viii. 4. In the second chapter and six first verses, is represented the supports Christ gives his church, while she is in a suffering state, *as the lily among thorns:* in the seventh verse is represented her patience in waiting for Christ, to appear for her deliverance, when she charges the daughters of Jerusalem not to stir up, nor awake her love till he please, *by the roes and the hinds of the field;* which are creatures of a gentle, harmless nature, are not beasts of prey, do not devour one another, do not fight with their enemies, but fly from them; and are of a pleasant, loving nature, Prov. v. 19. In the next verse, we see the Church's success, in this way of waiting under sufferings, with meekness and patience; Christ soon awakes, speedily appears, and swiftly comes: *The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills!*

SECTION II.

Of what must be done directly to promote the work.

What has been mentioned hitherto, has relation to the behavior we are obliged to, as we would prevent the hindrances of the work; but besides these, there are things that must be done, more directly to advance it. And here it concerns every one, in the first place, to look into his own heart, and see to it that he be a partaker of the benefits of the work himself, and that it be promoted in his own soul. Now is a most glorious opportunity for the good of souls. It is manifestly with respect to a time of great revival of religion in the world, that we have that gracious, earnest, and moving invitation proclaimed in Isa. lv., "Ho, every one that thirsteth!" &c. as is evident by what precedes in the foregoing chapter, and what follows in the close of this. Here, in the sixth verse, it is said, "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him, while he is near." And it is with special reference to such a time, that Christ proclaims as he does, Rev. xxi. 6., "I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely." And chap. xxii. 17. "And the Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And it seems to be with reference to such a time, which is typified by the feast of tabernacles, that Jesus, at that feast, stood and cried, as we have an acccount, John vii. 37, 38., "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And it is with special reference to God's freeness and readiness to bestow grace at such a time, that it is said in Isa. lx. 11., of the spiritual Jerusalem, "Thy

gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day or night."

And though I judge not those that have opposed this work, and would not have others judge them, yet, if any such shall happen to read this treatise, I would take the liberty to entreat them to leave off concerning themselves so much about others, and look into their own souls, and see to it that they are the subjects of a true, saving work of the Spirit of God. If they have reason to think they never have been, or it be but a very doubtful hope that they have, then how can they have any heart to be busily and fiercely engaged about the mistakes, and the supposed false hopes of others? And I would now beseech those that have hitherto been something inclining to Arminian principles, seriously to weigh the matter with respect to this work, and consider whether, if the scriptures are the word of God, the work that has been described in the first part of this treatise, must not needs be, as to the substance of it, the work of God, and the flourishing of that religion, that is taught by Christ and his apostles; and whether any good medium can be found, where a man can rest, with any stability, between owning this work, and being a deist; and also to consider whether or no, if it be indeed so, that this be the work of God, it does not entirely overthrow their scheme of religion; and therefore whether it does not infinitely concern them, as they would be partakers of eternal salvation, to relinquish their scheme. Now is a good time for Arminians to change their principles. I would now, as one of the friends of this work, humbly invite them to come and join with us, and be on our side; and if I had the authority of Moses, I would say to them as he did to Hobab, Num. x. 29., "We are journeying unto the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

As the benefit and advantage of the good improvement of such a season, is extraordinary great; so the danger of neg-

lecting and misimproving it is proportionably great. It is abundantly evident by the scripture, that as a time of great outpouring of the Spirit is a time of great favor to those that are partakers of the blessing; so it is always a time of remarkable vengeance to others. So in Isa. lxi. 2. the same that is called "the acceptable year of the Lord," is called also, "the day of vengeance of our God." So it was amongst the Jews, in the apostles' days: the apostle in 2 Cor. vi. 2. says of that time, that it was "the accepted time, and day of salvation;" and Christ says of the same time, Luke xxi. 22, "These are the days of vengeance." At the same time that the blessings of the kingdom of heaven were given to some, there was an "axe laid at the root of the trees, that those that did not bear fruit might be hewn down, and cast into the fire," Matt. iii. 9, 10, 11. Then was glorified, both the goodness and severity of God, in a remarkable manner. Rom. xi. 32. The harvest and the vintage go together: at the same time that the earth is reaped, and God's elect are gathered into the garner of God, "the angel that has power over fire thrusts in his sickle and gathers the cluster of the vine of the earth, and casts it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God," Rev. xiv. at the latter end. So it is foretold, that at the beginning of the glorious times of the Christian church, at the same time that "the hand of the Lord is known towards his servants, so shall his indignation, towards his enemies," Isa. lxvi. 14. So when that glorious morning shall appear, wherein "the Sun of Righteousness shall arise to the elect, with healing in his wings, the day shall burn as an oven to the wicked," Mal. iv. 1, 2, 3.

There is no time like such a time, for the increase of guilt, and treasuring up wrath, and desperate hardening of heart, if men stand it out; which is the most awful judgment, and fruit of divine wrath, that can be inflicted on any mortal. So that at a time of great grace, and pouring out of the Spirit, and the fruits of divine mercy, is evermore also a time of

great outpouring of something else, viz. divine vengeance on those that neglect and misimprove such a season.

The state of the present revival of religion, has an awful aspect upon those that are advanced in years. The work has been chiefly amongst those that are young; and comparatively but few others have been made partakers of it. And indeed, it has commonly been so, when God has begun any great work for the revival of his church; he has taken the young people, and has cast off the old and stiff-necked generation. There was a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God on the children of Israel in the wilderness, on the younger generation, *their little ones, that they said should be a prey*, the generation that entered into Canaan with Joshua; which is evident by many things in scripture. That generation seems to have been the most excellent generation that ever was in the church of Israel. There is no generation, of which there is so much good, and so little hurt spoken in scripture, as might be shown, if it would not be too long. In that generation that were under twenty years, when they went out of Egypt, was that *kindness of youth*, and *love of espousals*, spoken of, Jer. ii. 2, 3. But the old generation were passed by, and remained obstinate and stiff-necked, were always murmuring, and would not be convinced by all God's wondrous works that they beheld. God, by his awful judgments that he executed in the wilderness, and the affliction that the people suffered there, convinced and humbled the younger generation, and fitted them for great mercy, as is evident by Deut. ii. 16, but he destroyed the old generation; "he swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness." When it was a time of great mercy, and pouring out of God's Spirit on their children, it was remarkably a day of vengeance unto them, as appears by Psalm xc. Let the old generation in this land take warning from hence, and take heed that they do not refuse to be convinced, by all God's wonders that he works before their eyes, and that they do not continue forever object-

ing, murmuring, and caviling against the work of God, lest while God is bringing their children into a land flowing with milk and honey, he should swear in his wrath concerning them, that their carcasses shall fall in the wilderness.

So when God had a design of great mercy to the Jews, in bringing them out of the Babylonish captivity, and returning them to their own land, there was a blessed outpouring of the Spirit upon them in Babylon, to bring them to deep conviction and repentance, and to a spirit of prayer, to cry earnestly to God for mercy; which is often spoken of by the prophets: hut it was not upon the old generation, that were carried captive. The captivity continued just long enough for that perverse generation to waste away and die in their captivity; at least those of them that were adult persons, when carried captive. The old generation, and heads of families, were exceeding obstinate, and would not hearken to the earnest repeated warnings of the prophet Jeremiah; but he had greater success among the young people; as appears by Jer. vi. 10, 11. "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach: they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together; for even the husband with the wife (i. e. the heads of families, and parents of these children) shall be taken, the aged, with him that is full of days." Blessed be God! there are some of the elder people, that have been made partakers of this work; and those that are most awakened by these warnings of God's word, and the awful frowns of his providence, will be most likely to be made partakers hereafter. It infinitely concerns them to take heed to themselves, that they may be partakers of it; for how dreadful will it be to go to hell, after having spent so many years in doing nothing, but treasure up wrath!

SECTION III.

Duties of ministers and particular classes of persons.

But above all others whatsoever, does it concern us that are ministers, to see to it that we are partakers of this work, or that we have experience of the saving operations of the same spirit, that is now poured out on the land. How sorrowful and melancholy is the case, when it is otherwise? For one to stand at the head of a congregation of God's people, as representing Christ and speaking in his stead, and to act the part of a shepherd and guide to a people, in such a state of things, when many are under great awakenings, and many are converted, and many of God's saints are filled with divine light, love, and joy, and to undertake to instruct and lead them all, under all these various circumstances, and to be put to it, continually to play the hypocrite, and force the airs of a saint in preaching, and from time to time, in private conversation, and particular dealing with souls, to undertake to judge of their circumstances, to try to talk with those that come to him, as if he knew what they said; to try to talk with persons of experience, as if he knew how to converse with them, and had experience as well as they; to make others believe that he rejoices when others are converted, and to force a pleased and joyful countenance and manner of speech, when there is nothing in the heart, what sorrowful work is here! O how miserably must such a person feel! What a wretched bondage and slavery is this! What pains, and how much art must such a minister use to conceal himself! And how weak are his hands! Besides the infinite provocation of the Most High God, and displeasure of his Lord and Master, that he incurs, by continuing a secret enemy to him in his heart, in such circumstances, I think there is a great deal of reason, from the scripture, to conclude,

that no sort of men in the world, will be so low in hell, as ungodly ministers: every thing that is spoken of in scripture, as that which aggravates guilt, and heightens divine wrath, meets in them; however some particular persons, of other sorts, may be more guilty than some of these.

And what great disadvantages are unconverted ministers under, to oppose any irregularities, or imprudences, or intemperate zeal, that they may see in those that are the children of God, when they are conscious to themselves, that they have no zeal at all? If enthusiasm and wildness comes in like a flood, what poor weak instruments are such ministers to withstand it? With what courage can they open their mouths, when they look inward, and consider how it is with them?

We that are ministers, not only have need of some true experience of the saving influence of the Spirit of God upon our heart, but we need a double portion of the Spirit of God at such a time as this; we had need to be as full of light, as a glass is, that is held out in the sun; and with respect to love and zeal, we had need at this day, to be like the angels, that are a flame of fire. The state of the times extremely requires, a fullness of the divine Spirit in ministers, and we ought to give ourselves no rest till we have obtained it. And in order to this, I should think ministers, above all persons, ought to be much in secret prayer and fasting, and also much in praying and fasting one with another. It seems to me it would be becoming the circumstances of the present day, if ministers in a neighborhood would often meet together, and spend days in fasting and fervent prayer among themselves, earnestly seeking for those extraordinary supplies of divine grace from heaven, that we need at this day: and also if, on their occasional visits one to another, instead of spending away their time in sitting and smoking, and in diverting, or worldly, unprofitable conversation, telling news, and making their remarks on this and the other trifling subject, they would spend their time in praying together, and singing praises, and reli-

gious conference. How much do many of the common people shame many of us that are in the work of the ministry, in these respects? Surely we do not behave ourselves so much like Christian ministers, and the disciples and embassadors of Christ, as we ought to do. And while we condemn zealous persons for their doing so much at censuring ministers at this day, it ought not to be without deep reflections upon, and great condemnation of, ourselves: for indeed, we do very much to provoke censoriousness, and lay a great temptation, before others, to the sin of judging: and if we can prove, that those that are guilty of it do transgress the scripture rule, yet our indignation should be chiefly against ourselves.

Ministers, at this day in a special manner, should act as fellow-helpers, in their great work. It should be seen that they are animated and engaged, and exert themselves with one heart and soul, and with united strength, to promote the present glorious revival of religion: and to that end should often meet together, and act in concert. And if it were a common thing in the country, for ministers to join in public exercises, and second one another, in their preaching, I believe it would be of great service. I mean that ministers, having consulted one another as to the subjects of their discourses, before they go to the house of God, should there speak, two or three of them going, in short discourses, as seconding each other, and earnestly enforcing each others' warnings and counsels. Only such an appearance of united zeal in ministers, would have a great tendency to awaken attention, and much to impress and animate the hearers; as has been found by experience, in some parts of the country.

Ministers should carefully avoid weakening one another's hands. And therefore every thing should be avoided, by which their interest with their people might be diminished, or their union with them broken. On the contrary, if ministers have not forfeited their acceptance in that character, in the visible church, by their doctrine or behavior, their brethren

in the ministry ought studiously to endeavor to heighten the esteem and affection of their people towards them, that they may have no temptation to repent their admitting other ministers to come and preach in their pulpits.

Two things that are exceeding needful in ministers, as they would do any great matters, to advance the kingdom of Christ, are *zeal* and *resolution*. The influence and power of these things, to bring to pass great effects, is greater than can well be imagined: a man of but an ordinary capacity, will do more with them, than one of ten times the parts and learning, without them: more may be done with them, in a few days, or at least weeks, than can be done without them in many years. Those that are possessed of these qualities, commonly carry the day, in almost all affairs. Most of the great things that have been done in the world of mankind, the great revolutions that have been accomplished in the kingdoms and empires of the earth, have been chiefly owing to these things. The very sight or appearance of a thoroughly engaged spirit, together with a fearless courage and unyielding resolution, in any person that has undertaken the managing any affair amongst mankind, goes a great way towards accomplishing the effect aimed at. It is evident that the appearance of these things in Alexander, did three times as much towards his conquering the world, as all the blows that he struck. And how much were the great things that Oliver Cromwell did, owing to these things? And the greater things that Mr. Whitefield has done, every where, as he has run through the British dominions (so far as they are owing to means), are very much owing to the appearance of these things, which he is eminently possessed of. When the people see these things apparently in a person, and to a great degree, it awes them, and has a commanding influence upon their minds; it seems to them that they must yield; they naturally fall before them, without standing to contest or dispute the matter; they are conquered as it were by surprise. But while we are cold and heartless, and only go on in a dull manner, in an

old formal round, we shall never do any great matters. Our attempts, with the appearance of such coldness and irresolution, will not so much as make persons think of yielding: they will hardly be sufficient to put it into their minds; and if it be put into their minds, the appearance of such indifference and cowardice does as it were call for and provoke opposition. Our misery is want of zeal and courage; for not only through want of them, does all fail that we seem to attempt, but it prevents our attempting any thing very remarkable, for the kingdom of Christ. Hence, oftentimes it has been, that when any thing very considerable, that is new, is proposed to be done for the advancement of religion, or the public good, many difficulties are found out, that are in the way, and a great many objections are started, and it may be, it is put off from one to another; but nobody does any thing. And after this manner good designs or proposals have oftentimes failed, and have sunk as soon as proposed. Whereas, if we had but Mr. Whitefield's zeal and courage, what could not we do, with such a blessing as we might expect?

Zeal and courage will do much in persons of but an ordinary capacity; but especially would they do great things, if joined with great abilities. If some great men, that have appeared in our nation, had been as eminent in divinity, as they were in philosophy, and had engaged in the Christian cause, with as much zeal and fervor as some others have done, and with a proportionable blessing of Heaven, they would have conquered all Christendom, and turned the world upside down. We have many ministers in the land that do not want for abilities; they are persons of bright parts and learning; they should consider how much is expected, and will be required of them, by their Lord and Master, and how much they might do for Christ, and what great honor and how glorious a reward they might receive, if they had in their hearts a heavenly warmth, and divine heat, proportionable to their light.

With respect to candidates for the ministry, I would not undertake particularly to determine what kind of examination or trial they should pass under, in order to their admission to that sacred work: but I think this is evident from the scripture, that another sort of trial, with regard to their virtue and piety is requisite, than is required in order to persons being admitted into the visible church. The apostle directs, *that hands be laid suddenly on no man;* but that they should *first be tried* before they are admitted to the work of the ministry: but it is evident that persons were suddenly admitted, by baptism, into the visible church, from time to time, on their profession of their faith in Christ, without such caution and strictness in their probation. And it seems to me, those would act very unadvisedly, that should enter on that great and sacred work, before they had comfortable satisfaction concerning themselves, that they have had a saving work of God on their souls.

And though it may be thought, that I go out of my proper sphere, to intermeddle in the affairs of the colleges, yet I will take the liberty of an Englishman (that speaks his mind freely, concerning public affairs), and the liberty of a minister of Christ (who, doubtless, may speak his mind as freely about things that concern the kingdom of his Lord and Master), to give my opinion, in some things, with respect to those societies; the original and main design of which is to train up persons, and fit them for the work of the ministry. And I would say in general, that it appears to me that care should be taken, some way or other, that those societies should be so regulated, that they should, in fact, be nurseries of piety. Otherwise, they are fundamentally ruined and undone, as to their main design, and most essential end. They ought to be so constituted, that vice and idleness should have no living there: they are intolerable in societies, whose main design is to train up youth in Christian knowledge and eminent piety, to fit them to be pastors of the flock of the blessed Jesus. I have heretofore had some acquaintance with the affairs of a

college, and experience of what belonged to its tuition and government; and I cannot but think it is practicable enough, so to constitute such societies, that there should be no being there, without being virtuous, serious, and diligent. It seems to me to be a reproach to the land, that ever it should be so with our colleges, that instead of being places of the greatest advantages for true piety, one cannot send a child thither without great danger of his being infected, as to his morals; as it has certainly sometimes been with these societies: it is perfectly intolerable; and any thing should be done, rather than it should be so. If we pretend to have any colleges at all, under any notion of training up youth for the ministry, there should be some way found out that should certainly prevent its being thus. To have societies for bringing persons up to be embassadors of Jesus Christ, and to lead souls to heaven, and to have them places of so much infection, is the greatest nonsense and absurdity imaginable.

And, as thorough and effectual care should be taken that vice and idleness be not tolerated in these societies, so certainly, the design of them requires, that extraordinary means should be used in them, for training up the students in vital religion, and experimental and practical godliness, so that they should be holy societies, the very place should be as it were sacred: they should be in the midst of the land fountains of piety and holiness. There is a great deal of pains taken to teach the scholars human learning; there ought to be as much, and more care, thoroughly to educate them in religion, and lead them to true and eminent holiness. If the main design of these nurseries is to bring up persons to teach Christ, then it is of greatest importance that there should be care and pains taken to bring those that are there educated to the knowledge of Christ. It has been common in our public prayers to call these societies *the schools of the prophets;* and if they are schools to train up young men to be *prophets*, certainly there ought to be extraordinary care there taken to train them up to be *Christians*.

And I cannot see why it is not on all accounts fit and convenient for the governors and intructors of the colleges, particularly, singly and frequently to converse with the students about the state of their souls. As is the practice of the Rev. Dr. Doddridge, one of the most noted of the present dissenting ministers in England, who keeps an academy at Northampton, as he himself informs the Rev. Mr. Wadsworth, of Hartford, in Connecticut, in a letter, dated at Northampton, March 6, 1740—41. The original of which letter I have seen, and have by me an extract of it, sent to me by Mr. Wadsworth, which is as follows:

"Through the divine goodness, I have every year the pleasure to see some plants taken out of my nursery and set in neighboring congregations, where they generally settle with a unanimous consent, and that to a very remarkable degree, in some very large, and once divided congregations: a circumstance in which I own and adore the hand of a wise and gracious God, and cannot but look upon it as a token for good. I have at present a greater proportion of pious and ingenious youth under my care than I ever before had. So that I hope the church may reasonably expect some considerable relief from hence, if God spare their lives a few years, and continue to them those gracious assistances which he has hitherto mercifully imparted. I will not, sir, trouble you at present with a large account of my method of academical education: only would observe, that I think it of vast importance to instruct them carefully in the scriptures, and not only endeavor to establish them in the great truths of Christianity, but to labor to promote their practical influence on their hearts. For which purpose I frequently converse with each of them alone, and conclude the conversation with prayer. This does indeed take up a great deal of time; but I bless God it is amply repaired, in the pleasure I have in seeing my labor is not in vain in the Lord."

There are some that are not ministers, nor are concerned immediately in those things that appertain to their office, or in

the education of persons for it, that are under great advantages to promote such a glorious work as this. Some laymen, though it be not their business publicly to exhort and teach, yet are in some respects under greater advantage to encourage and forward this work, than ministers. As particularly great men, or men that are high in honor and influence. How much might such do to encourage religion, and open the way for it to have free course, and bear down opposition, if they were but inclined? There is commonly a certain unhappy shyness in great men with respect to religion, as though they were ashamed of it, or at least, ashamed to do very much at it; whereby they dishonor, and doubtless, greatly provoke the King of kings, and very much wound religion among the common people. They are careful of their honor, and seem to be afraid of appearing openly forward and zealous in religion, as though it were what would debase their character and expose them to contempt. But in this day of bringing up the ark, they ought to be like David, that great king of Israel, who *made himself vile before* the ark; and as he was the highest in honor and dignity among God's people, so thought it became him to appear foremost in the zeal and activity he manifested on that occasion; thereby animating and encouraging the whole congregation to praise the Lord, and rejoice before him, with all their might: and though it diminished him in the eyes of scoffing Michal, yet it did not at all abate the honor and esteem of the congregation of Israel, but advanced it; as appears by 2 Sam. vi. 22.

Rich men have a talent in their hands, in the disposal and improvement of which, they might very much promote such a work as this, if they were so disposed. They are far beyond others under advantage to do good, and lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. What a thousand pities is it, that for want of a heart, they have commonly no share at all there, but heaven is peopled mostly with the poor of this world? One would think that our rich men, that call them-

selves Christians, might devise some notable things, to do with their money, to advance the kingdom of their professed Redeemer, and the prosperity of the souls of men, at this time of such extraordinary advantage for it. It seems to me, that in this age, most of us have but very narrow, penurious notions of Christianity, as it respects our use and disposal of our temporal goods. The primitive Christians had not such notions; they were trained up by the apostles in another way. God has greatly distinguished some of the inhabitants of New England, from others, in the abundance that he has given them of the good things of this life. If they could now be persuaded to lay out some considerable part of that which God has given them, for the honor of God, and lay it up in heaven, instead of spending it for their own honor, or laying it up for their posterity, they would not repent of it afterwards. How liberally did the heads of the tribes contribute of their wealth, at the setting up of the tabernacle, though it was in a barren wilderness? These are the days of the erecting the tabernacle of God amongst us. We have a particular account how the goldsmiths and the merchants helped to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, Neh. iii. 32. The days are coming spoken of in scripture, and I believe not very far off, when the sons of *Zion shall come from far, bringing their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord their God, and to the Holy One of Israel;* and when the merchants of the earth shall trade for Christ, more than for themselves, and *their merchandise and hire shall be holiness to the Lord, and shall not be treasured, or laid up for posterity, but shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing:* and when *the ships of Tarshish shall bring* the wealth of the distant parts of the earth, *to the place of God's sanctuary, and to make the place of his feet glorious;* and *the abundance of the sea shall be converted to the use of God's church, and she shall suck the milk of the Gentiles, and suck the breasts of kings.* The days are

coming, when the great and rich men of the world *shall bring their honor and glory into the church*, and shall, as it were, strip themselves to spread their garments under Christ's feet, as he enters triumphantly into Jerusalem; and when those that will not do so shall have no glory, and their silver and gold shall be cankered, and their garments moth-eaten: for the saints shall then inherit the earth, and they shall reign on earth, and those that honor God he will honor, and those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed.

If some of our rich men would give one quarter of their estates to promote this work, they would act a little as if they were designed for the kingdom of heaven, and a little as rich men will act by and by, that shall be partakers of the spiritual wealth and glories of that kingdom.

Great things might be done for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, at this day, by those that have ability, by establishing funds for the support and propagation of religion; by supporting some that are eminently qualified with gifts and grace, in preaching the gospel in certain parts of the country, that are more destitute of the means of grace; in searching out children of promising abilities, and their hearts full of love to Christ, but of poor families, (as doubtless there are such now in the land,) and bringing them up for the ministry; and in distributing books that are remarkably fitted to promote vital religion, and have a great tendency to advance this work; or if they would only bear the trouble, expense, and loss of sending such books into various parts of the land to be sold, it might be an occasion that ten times so many of those books should be bought, as otherwise would be; and in establishing and supporting schools in poor towns and villages; which might be done on such a foundation, as not only to bring up children in common learning, but also, might very much tend to their conviction and conversion, and being trained up in vital piety; and doubtless something might be done this way, in old towns, and more populous

places, that might have a great tendency to the flourishing of religion in the rising generation.

SECTION IV.

Of duties that concern all in general.

But I would now proceed to mention some things, that ought to be done, at such a day as this, that concern all in general.

And here, the first thing I shall mention, is *fasting and prayer*. It seems to me, that the circumstances of the present work do loudly call God's people to abound in this; whether they consider the experience God has lately given them, of the worth of his presence, and of the blessed fruits of the effusions of his Spirit, to excite them to pray for the continuance and increase, and greater extent of such blessings; or whether they consider the great encouragement God has lately given them to pray for the outpourings of his Spirit, and the carrying on this work, by the great manifestations he has lately made of the freeness and riches of his grace; and how much there is in what we have seen of the glorious works of God's power and grace, to put us in mind of the yet greater things of this nature, that he has spoken of in his word, and to excite our longings for those things, and hopes of their approach; or whether we consider the great opposition that Satan makes against this work, and the many difficulties with which it is clogged, and the distressing circumstances that some parts of God's church in this land are under at this day, on one account and another.

So it is God's will, through his wonderful grace, that the prayers of his saints should be one great and principal means of carrying on the designs of Christ's kingdom in the world. When God has something very great to accomplish for his

church, it is his will that there should precede it the extraordinary prayers of his people; as is manifested by Ezek. xxxvi. 37. "I will yet, for this, be inquired of, by the house of Israel, to do it for them;" together with the context. And it is revealed that, when God is about to accomplish great things for his church, he will begin by remarkably pouring out the Spirit of grace and supplication, Zech. xii. 10. If we are not to expect that the devil should go out of a particular person, that is under a bodily possession, without extraordinary prayer, *or prayer and fasting;* how much less, should we expect to have him cast out of the land, and the world, without it.

I am sensible that considerable has been done in duties of this nature, in some places; but I do not think so much as God, in the present dispensations of his providence, calls for. I should think the people of God in this land, at such a time as this is, would be in the way of their duty, to do three times so much at fasting and prayer as they do; not only, nor principally, for the pouring out of the Spirit on those towns or places where they belong; but that God would appear for his church, and in mercy to miserable men, to carry on his work in the land, and in the world of mankind, and to fulfill the things that he has spoken of in his word, that his church has been so long wishing and hoping and waiting for. *They that make mention of the Lord*, at this day, ought not *to keep silence*, and should *give God no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth*, agreeably to Isa. lxii. 6, 7. Before the first great outpouring of the Spirit of God, on the Christian church, which began at Jerusalem, the church of God gave themselves to incessant prayer, Acts i. 13, 14. There is a time spoken of, wherein God will remarkably and wonderfully appear, for the deliverance of his church from all her enemies, and when he will *avenge his own elect:* and Christ reveals that this will be in answer to their incessant prayers, or *crying day and night*, Luke xviii. 7. In Israel,

the day of atonement, which was their great day of fasting and prayer, preceded and made way for the glorious and joyful feast of tabernacles. When Christ is mystically born into the world, to rule over all nations, it is represented in Rev. xii. as being in consequence of the church's "crying, and travailing in birth, and being pained to be delivered." One thing here intended, doubtless is, her crying and agonizing in prayer.

God seems now, at this very time, to be waiting for this from us. When God is about to bestow some great blessing on his church, it is often his manner, in the first place, so to order things in his providence, as to show his church their great need of it, and to bring them into distress for want of it, and so put them upon crying earnestly to him for it. And let us consider God's present dispensations towards his church in this land: a glorious work of his grace has been begun and carried on; and God has, of late, suffered innumerable difficulties to arise, that do in a great measure clog and hinder it, and bring many of God's dear children into great distress; and yet does not wholly forsake the work of his hand; there are remarkable tokens of his presence still to be seen, here and there; as though he was not forward to forsake us, and (if I may so say) as though he had a mind to carry on his work; but only was waiting for something that he expected in us, as requisite in order to it. And we have a great deal of reason to think, that one thing at least is, that we should further acknowledge the greatness and necessity of such a mercy, and our dependence on God for it, in earnest and importunate prayers to him. And by the many errors that have been run into, and the wounds we have thereby given ourselves and the cause that we would promote, and the mischief and confusion we have thereby made, God has hitherto been remarkably showing us our great and universal dependence on him, and exceeding need of his help and grace; which should engage our cries to him for it.

'There is no way that Christians, in a private capacity, can do so much to promote the work of God, and advance the kingdom of Christ, as by prayer. By this, even women, children, and servants, may have a public influence. Let persons be never so weak, and never so mean, and under never so poor advantages to do much for Christ, and the souls of men, otherwise; yet, if they have much of the spirit of grace and supplication, in this way, they may have power with Him that is infinite in power, and has the government of the whole world: and so a poor man in his cottage may have a blessed influence all over the world. God is, if I may so say, at the command of the prayer of faith; and in this respect is, as it were, under the power of his people; *as princes, they have power with God, and prevail:* though they may be private persons, their prayers are put up in the name of a Mediator, that is a public person, being the Head of the whole church, and the Lord of the universe: and if they have a great sense of the importance of eternal things, and concern for the precious souls of men, yet they need not regret it, that they are not preachers; they may go in their earnestness and agonies of soul, and pour out their souls before one that is able to do all things; before him they may speak as freely as ministers; they have a great High Priest, through whom they may come boldly at all times, and may vent themselves before a prayer-hearing Father, without any restraint.

If the people of God, at this day, instead of spending time in fruitless disputing, and talking about opposers, and judging of them, and animadverting upon the unreasonableness of their talk and behavior, and its inconsistence with true experience, would be more silent in this way, and open their mouths much more before God, and spend more time in fasting and prayer, they would be more in the way of a blessing. And if some Christians in the land, that have been complaining of their ministers, and struggling in vain to deliver themselves from the difficulties they have com-

plained of under their ministry, had said and acted less before men, and had applied themselves with all their might to cry to God for their ministers, had, as it were, risen, and stormed heaven with their humble, fervent, and incessant prayers for them, they would have been much more in the way of success.

God, in his providence, appearing in the present state of things, does especially call on his people in New England to be very much in praying to him for the pouring out of the Spirit upon ministers in the land. For though it is not for us to determine, concerning particular ministers, how much they have of the Spirit of God; yet in the general, it is apparent that there is, at this day, need of very great degrees of the presence of God with the ministry in New England, much greater degrees of it than has hitherto been granted; they need it for themselves, and the church of God stands in extreme need of it.

In days of fasting and prayer, wherein the whole church or congregation is concerned, if the whole day, besides what is spent in our families, was not spent in the meeting-house, but part of it in particular praying companies or societies, it would have a tendency to animate and engage devotion, more than if the whole day were spent in public, where the people are no way active themselves in the worship, any otherwise than as they join with the minister. The inhabitants of many of our towns are now divided into particular praying societies, most of the people, young and old, have voluntarily associated themselves in distinct companies, for mutual assistance, in social worship, in private houses: What I intend therefore is, that days of prayer should be spent partly in these distinct praying companies. Such a method of keeping a fast as *this*, has several times been proved, viz. in the forenoon, after the duties of the family and closet, as early as might be, all the people of the congregation have gathered in their particular religious societies: companies of men by themselves, and companies of

women by themselves ; young men by themselves, and young women by themselves ; and companies of children, in all parts of the town, by themselves, as many as were capable of social religious exercises ; the boys by themselves, and girls by themselves : and about the middle of the day, at an appointed hour, all have met together in the house of God, to offer up public prayers, and to hear a sermon suitable to the occasion : and then, they have retired from the house of God again, into their private societies, and spent the remaining part of the day in praying together there, excepting so much as was requisite for the duties of the family and closet, in their own houses. And it has been found to be of great benefit, to assist and engage the minds of the people in the duties of the day.

I have often thought it would be a thing very desirable, and very likely to be followed with a great blessing, if there could be some contrivance that there should be an agreement of all God's people in America, that are well affected to this work, to keep a day of fasting and prayer to God ; wherein we should all unite on the same day in humbling ourselves before God for our past long continued lukewarmness and unprofitableness ; not omitting humiliation for the errors that so many of God's people that have been zealously affected towards this work, through their infirmity and remaining blindness and corruption, have run into ; and together with thanksgiving to God, for so glorious and wonderful a display of his power and grace, in the late outpourings of his Spirit, to address the Father of mercies, with prayers and supplications, and earnest cries, that he would guide and direct his own people, and that he would continue, and still carry on his work, and more abundantly and extensively pour out his Spirit ; and particularly that he would pour out his Spirit upon ministers ; and that he would bow the heavens and come down, and erect his glorious kingdom through the earth. Some perhaps may think that its being all on the same day, is a circumstance of no great

consequence ; but I cannot be of that mind : such a circumstance makes the union and agreement of God's people in his worship the more visible, and puts the greater honor upon God, and would have a great tendency to assist and enliven the devotions of Christians : it seems to me it would mightily encourage and animate God's saints, in humbly and earnestly seeking to God, for such blessings which concerns them all ; and that it would be much for the rejoicing of all to think, that at the same time, such multitudes of God's dear children, far and near, were sending up their cries to the same common Father, for the same mercies. Christ speaks of agreement in asking, as what contributes to the prevalence of the prayers of his people, Mat. xviii. 19. "Again, I say unto you, that if any two of you, shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." If the agreement, or united purpose and appointment of but two of God's children, would contribute much to the prevalence of their prayers, how much more the agreement of so many thousands ? Christ delights greatly in the union of his people, as appears by his prayer in John xvii. And especially is the appearance of their union in worship lovely and attractive unto him.

I doubt not but such a thing as I have now mentioned is practicable, without a great deal of trouble : some considerable number of ministers might meet together, and draw up the proposal, wherein a certain day should be pitched upon, at a sufficient distance, endeavoring therein to avoid any other public day, that might interfere with the design, in any of the provinces, and the business of the day should be particularly mentioned ; and these proposals should be published and sent abroad, into all parts, with a desire, that as many ministers as are disposed to fall in with them, would propose the matter to their congregations, and having taken their consent, would subscribe their names, together with the places of which they are ministers, and send back the proposals thus

subscribed, to the printer; (the hands of many ministers might be to one paper); and the printer having received the papers, thus subscribed, from all the provinces, might print the proposals again, with all the names; thus they might be sent abroad again, with the names, that God's people might know who are united with them in the affair: one of the ministers of Boston might be desired to have the oversight of the printing and dispersing the proposals. In such a way, perhaps, might be fulfilled, in some measure, such a general mourning and supplication of God's people, as is spoken of, Zech. xii. at the latter end, with which the church's glorious day is to be introduced. And such a day might be something like the day of atonement in Israel, before the joyful feast of tabernacles.

One thing more I would mention concerning fasting and prayer, wherein I think there has been a neglect in ministers; and that is, that although they recommend, and much insist on the duty of secret prayer, in their preaching, so little is said about secret fasting. It is a duty recommended by our Savior to his followers, just in like manner as secret prayer is; as may be seen by comparing ver. 5, 6. of Matt. vi. with ver. 16, 17, 18. Though I do not suppose that secret fasting is to be practiced in a stated manner, and steady course, as secret prayer, yet it seems to me, it is a duty that all professing Christians should practice, and frequently practice. There are many occasions, of both a spiritual and temporal nature, that do properly require it; and there are many particular mercies, that we desire for ourselves or friends, that it would be proper, in this manner, to seek of God.

Another thing I would also mention, wherein it appears to me that there has been an omission, with respect to the external worship of God. There has been of late, a great increase of preaching the word, and a great increase of social prayer, and a great increase of singing praises: these external duties of religion are attended, much more frequently than they used to be; yet I cannot understand that there is

any increase of the administration of the Lord's supper, or that God's people do any more frequently commemorate the dying love of their Redeemer, in this sacred memorial of it, than they used to do: though I do not see why an increase of love to Christ, should not dispose Christians, as much to increase in this, as in those other duties; or why it is not as proper, that Christ's disciples should abound in this duty, in this joyful season, which is spiritually supper-time, a feast-day with God's saints, wherein Christ is so abundantly manifesting his dying love to souls, and is dealing forth so liberally of the precious fruits of his death. It seems plain by the scripture, that the primitive Christians were wont to celebrate this memorial of the sufferings of their dear Redeemer every Lord's day: and so I believe it will be again in the church of Christ, in days that are approaching. And whether we attend this holy and sweet ordinance so often now, or no, yet I cannot but think it would become us, at such a time as this, to attend it much oftener than is commonly done in the land.

SECTION V.

The work to be promoted by attention to moral duties.

But another thing I would mention, which it is of much greater importance, that we should attend to: and that is the duty, that is incumbent upon God's people at this day, to take heed, that while they abound in external duties of devotion, such as praying, hearing, singing, and attending religious meetings, there be a proportionable care to abound in moral duties, such as acts of righteousness, truth, meekness, forgiveness and love towards our neighbor; which are of much greater importance in the sight of God, than all the externals of his worship; which our Savior was particularly careful, that men should be well aware of. Matt. ix.

13. "But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." And chap. xii. 7. "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

The internal acts and principles of the worship of God, or the worship of the heart, in the love and fear of God, trust in God, and resignation to God, &c., are the most essential and important of all duties of religion whatsoever; for therein consists the essence of all religion. But of this inward religion, there are two sorts of external manifestations or expressions. The one sort are outward acts of worship, such as meeting in religious assemblies, attending sacraments, and other outward institutions, and honoring God with gestures, such as bowing, or kneeling before him, or with words, in speaking honorably of him, in prayer, praise, or religious conference. And the other sort, are the expressions of our love to God, by obeying his moral commands, of self-denial, righteousness, meekness, and Christian love, in our behavior among men. And the latter are of vastly the greatest importance in the Christian life. God makes little account of the former, in comparison of them. They are abundantly more insisted on, by the prophets, in the old testament, and Christ and his apostles, in the new. When these two kinds of duties are spoken of together, the latter are evermore greatly preferred. As in Isa. i. 12—18. and Amos v. 21. &c., and Mic. vi. 7, 8. and Isa. lviii. 5, 6, 7. and Zech. vii. ten first verses, and Jer. ii. seven first verses, and Matt. xv. 3., &c. Often, when the times were very corrupt in Israel, the people abounded in the former kind of duties, but were at such times, always notoriously deficient in the latter; as the prophets complain, Isa. lviii. four first verses, Jer. vi. 13. compared with ver. 20. Hypocrites and self-righteous persons, do much more commonly abound in the former kind of duties, than the latter; as Christ remarks of the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. 14, 25, 34. When the scripture directs us to *show our faith by our works*, it is principally the latter sort

are intended; as appears by James ii. from ver. 8. to the end, and 1 John ii. 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. And we are to be judged at the last day, especially by these latter sort of works; as is evident by the account we have of the day of judgment, in Matt. xxv. External acts of worship, in words and gestures, and outward forms, are of little use, but as signs of something else, or as they are a profession of inward worship: they are not so properly showing our religion by our deeds; for they are only a showing our religion by words, or an outward profession. But he that shows religion in the other sort of duties, shows it in something more than a profession of words, he shows it in deeds. And though deeds may be hypocritical, as well as words; yet in themselves they are of greater importance, for they are much more profitable to ourselves and our neighbor. We cannot express our love to God, by doing any thing that is profitable to God; God would therefore have us to do it in those things that are profitable to our neighbors, whom he has constituted his receivers: our goodness extends not to God, but to our fellow-Christians. The latter sort of duties puts greater honor upon God, because there is greater self-denial in them. The external acts of worship, consisting in bodily gestures, words, and sounds, are the cheapest part of religion, and least contrary to our lusts. The difficulty of thorough, external religion, does not lie in them. Let wicked men enjoy their covetousness and their pride, their malice, envy and revenge, and their sensuality and voluptuousness, in their behavior amongst men, and they will be willing to compound the matter with God, and submit to what forms of worship you please, and as many as you please; as is manifest in the Jews of old, in the days of the prophets, and the Pharisees in Christ's time, and the Papists and Mahometans, at this day.

At a time when there is an appearance of the approach of any glorious revival of God's church, God does especially call his professing people to the practice of moral duties. Isa. lvi. 1. "Thus saith the Lord, keep ye judgment, and do

justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed." So when John preached, that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand," and cried to the people, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," as we have an account, Luke iii. 4., the people asked him, "What they should do?" he answers, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. The publicans said, "What shall we do?" He answers, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." And the soldiers asked him, "What shall we do?" He replies, "Do violence to no man; neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." ver. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

God's people, at such a time as this, ought especially to abound in deeds of charity or alms-giving. We generally, in these days, seem to fall far below the true spirit and practice of Christianity, with regard to this duty, and seem to have but little notion of it, so far as I can understand the New Testament. At a time when God is so liberal of spiritual things, we ought not to be straight-handed towards him, and sparing of our temporal things. So far as I can judge by the scripture, there is no external duty whatsoever, by which persons will be so much in the way, not only of receiving temporal benefits, but also spiritual blessings, the influences of God's Holy Spirit in the heart, in divine discoveries, and spiritual consolations. I think it would be unreasonable to understand those promises made to this duty, in Isa. lviii. in a sense exclusive of spiritual discoveries and comforts. Isa. lviii. 7, &c. "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rere-ward: then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer, thou shalt cry,

and he shalt say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." So that giving to the poor is the way to receive spiritual blessings, is manifest by Psalm cxii. 4, &c. "Unto the upright, there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion and righteous: a good man showeth favor and lendeth, he will guide his affairs with discretion; surely he shall not be moved forever; the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; his heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies: he hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his horn shall be exalted with honor." That this is one likely means to obtain assurance, is evident by 1 John iii. 18, 19. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth; and hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

We have a remarkable instance in Abraham, of God's rewarding deeds of charity with sweet discoveries of himself, when he had been remarkably charitable to his brother Lot, and the people that he had redeemed out of captivity with him, by exposing his life to rescue them, and had retaken not only the persons, but all the goods, the spoil that had been taken by Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and the king of Sodom offered him, that if he would give him the persons, he might take the goods to himself, Abraham refused to take any thing, even so much as a thread or shoelatchet, but returned all. He might have greatly enriched himself, if he had taken the spoils to himself, for it was the

spoils of five wealthy kings, and their kingdoms, yet he coveted it not; the king and people of Sodom were now become objects of charity, having been stripped of all by their enemies, therefore Abraham generously bestowed all upon them; as we have an account in Gen. xiv. and four last verses. And he was soon rewarded for it, by a blessed discovery that God made of himself to him; as we have an account in the next words: "After these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram, in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." "I am thy shield, to defend thee in battle, as I have now done; and though thou hast charitably refused to take any reward, for exposing thy life, to rescue this people, yet fear not, thou shalt not lose, thou shalt have a reward, I am thy exceeding great reward."

When Christ was upon earth, he was poor, and an object of charity; and during the time of his public ministry, he was supported by the charity of some of his followers, and particularly certain women, of whom we read Luke viii. 2, 3. And these women were rewarded, by being peculiarly favored with gracious manifestations, which Christ made of himself to them. He discovered himself first to them after his resurrection, before the twelve disciples: they first saw a vision of glorious angels, who spake comfortably to them; and then Christ appeared to them, and spake peace to them, "saying, All hail, be not afraid;" and they were admitted to come, and hold him by the feet, and worship him. Matt. xxviii. And though we cannot now be charitable in this way, to Christ in person, who, in his exalted state, is infinitely above the need of our charity; yet we may be charitable to Christ now, as well as they then; for though Christ is not here, yet he has left others in his room, to be his receivers; and they are the poor. Christ is yet poor in his members, and he that gives to them lends to the Lord: and Christ tells us that he shall look on what is done to them, as done to him.

Rebekah, in her marriage with Isaac, was undoubtedly a remarkable type of the church, in her espousals to the Lord Jesus. But she found her husband, in doing deeds of charity, agreeable to the prayer of Abraham's servant, who prayed that this might be the thing that might distinguish and mark out the virgin, that was to be Isaac's wife. So Cornelius was brought to the knowledge of Christ in this way. "He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. And an angel appeared to him, and said to him, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God; and now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter," &c. Acts x. at the beginning. And we have an account in the following parts of the chapter, how God, by Peter's preaching, revealed Christ to Cornelius and his family, and of the Holy Ghost descending upon them, and filling their hearts with joy, and their mouths with praise.

Some may possibly object, that for persons to do deeds of charity, in hope of obtaining spiritual blessings and comforts in this way, would seem to show a self-righteous spirit, as though they would offer something to God, to purchase these favors. But if this be a good objection, it may be made against every duty whatsoever. All external duties of the first table will be excluded by it, as well as those of the second. First table duties have as direct a tendency to raise self-righteous persons' expectations of receiving something from God, on account of them, as second table duties; and on some accounts more, for those duties are more immediately offered *to God*, and therefore persons are more ready to expect something *from God* for them. But no duty is to be neglected, for fear of making a righteousness of it. And I have always observed, that those professors that are most partial in their duty, exact and abundant in external duties of the first table, and slack as to those of the second, are the most self-righteous.

If God's people in this land, were once brought to abound in such deeds of love, as much as in praying, hearing, singing, and religious meetings and conference, it would be a most blessed omen: there is nothing would have a greater tendency to bring the God of love down from heaven to the earth: so amiable would be the sight, in the eyes of our loving and exalted Redeemer, that it would soon as it were fetch him down from his throne in heaven, to set up his tabernacle with men on the earth, and dwell with them. I do not remember ever to have read of any remarkable outpouring of the spirit, that continued any long time, but what was attended with an abounding in this duty. So we know it was with that great effusion of the Spirit that began at Jerusalem in the apostles' days: and so in the late remarkable revival of religion in Saxony, which began by the labors of the famous professor Franck, and has now been carried on for above thirty years, and has spread its happy influence into many parts of the world; it was begun, and has been carried on, by a wonderful practice of this duty. And the remarkable blessing that God has given Mr. Whitefield, and the great success with which he has crowned him, may well be thought to be very much owing to his laying out himself so abundantly in charitable designs. And it is foretold, that God's people shall abound in this duty, in the time of the great outpouring of the spirit that shall be in the latter days, Isa. xxxii. 5, 8. "The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand."

To promote a reformation, with respect to all sorts of duties, among a professing people, one proper means, and that which is recommended by frequent scripture examples, is their solemn, public renewing their covenant with God. And doubtless it would greatly tend to promote this work in the land, if the congregations of God's people could generally be brought to this. If a draft of a covenant should be made by their ministers, wherein there should be an express mention of

those particular duties, that the people of the respective congregations have been observed to be most prone to neglect, and those particular sins that they have heretofore especially fallen into, or that it may be apprehended they are especially in danger of, whereby they may prevent or resist the motions of God's Spirit, and the matter should be fully proposed and explained to the people, and they have sufficient opportunity given them for consideration, and then they should be led, all that are capable of understanding, particularly to subscribe the covenant, and also should all appear together, on a day of prayer and fasting, publicly to own it before God in his house, as their vow to the Lord; hereby congregations of Christians would do that which would be beautiful, and would put honor upon God, and be very profitable to themselves.

Such a thing as this was attended with a very wonderful blessing in Scotland, and followed with a great increase of the blessed tokens of the presence of God, and remarkable outpourings of his Spirit, as the author of *the fulfilling of the scripture* informs, p. 186, fifth edition.

A people must be taken when they are in a good mood, when considerable religious impressions are prevailing among them; otherwise they will hardly be induced to this; but innumerable will be their objections and cavils against it.

One thing more I would mention, which if God should still carry on this work, would tend much to promote it, and that is, that a history should be published once a month, or once a fortnight, of the progress of it, by one of the ministers of Boston, who are near the press, and are most conveniently situated, to receive accounts from all parts. It has been found by experience, that the tidings of remarkable effects of the power and grace of God, in any place, tend greatly to awaken and engage the minds of persons, in other places. It is great pity therefore, but that some means should be used, for the most speedy, most extensive and certain giving information of such things, and that the country be not left only to the

slow, partial, and doubtful information, and false representations of common report.

Thus I have (I hope, by the help of God) finished what I proposed. I have taken the more pains in it, because it appears to me, that now God is giving us the most happy season to attempt a universal reformation, that ever was given in New England. And it is a thousand pities that we should fail of that which would be so glorious, for want of being sensible of our opportunity, or being aware of those things that tend to hinder it, or our taking improper courses to obtain it, or not being sensible in what way God expects we should seek it. If it should please God to bless any means, for the convincing the country of his hand in this work, and bringing them fully and freely to acknowledge his glorious power and grace in it, and engage with one heart and soul, and by due methods, to endeavor to promote it, it would be a dispensation of Divine Providence that would have a most glorious aspect, happily signifying the approach of great and glorious things to the church of God, and justly causing us to hope that Christ would speedily come, to set up his kingdom of light, holiness, peace and joy on earth, as is foretold in his word. *Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus!*

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